

Spring 5-15-2019

# Network Poetics: Studies in Early Modern Literary Collaboration

John Ladd

*Washington University in St. Louis*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/art\\_sci\\_etds](https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/art_sci_etds)



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Ladd, John, "Network Poetics: Studies in Early Modern Literary Collaboration" (2019). *Arts & Sciences Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 1830.

[https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/art\\_sci\\_etds/1830](https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/art_sci_etds/1830)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Arts & Sciences at Washington University Open Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Arts & Sciences Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Washington University Open Scholarship. For more information, please contact [digital@wumail.wustl.edu](mailto:digital@wumail.wustl.edu).

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of English

Dissertation Examination Committee:

Steven Zwicker, Chair

Anupam Basu

Joseph Loewenstein

Jessica Rosenfeld

Christopher Warren

Network Poetics:

Studies in Early Modern Literary Collaboration

by

John R. Ladd

A dissertation presented to  
The Graduate School  
of Washington University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2019  
St. Louis, Missouri

© 2019, John R. Ladd

# **Table of Contents**

List of Figures .....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Abstract .....	xi
Introduction.....	1
1.1 A Brief Critical History of Collaboration .....	3
1.2 Networks as Way of Thinking .....	7
1.3 Networks, Collaboration, and Literary Forms .....	11
Works Cited.....	16
Reassembling the Landscape: Chorographic Networks in <i>Poly-Olbion</i> .....	18
2.1 Dialogue in Drayton's Verse.....	20
2.2 Personification: Hole's Engravings.....	29
2.3 Paratext: Selden's Illustrations.....	37
Works Cited.....	45
Reading Printed Poetry Collections: Rhapsody, Monody, Anthology .....	47
3.1 Networks and Readers.....	52
3.2 Re-forming Chronology .....	88
Works Cited.....	98
The Productive Energies of Rivalry: Literary Personality in Collaborative Networks .....	100
4.1 Shakespeare .....	102
4.2 Dryden.....	112
4.3 Shakespeare and Dryden .....	126
Works Cited.....	136
Coterie Culture and Authorial Persona in the Poetry of Katherine Philips .....	137
Works Cited.....	158
Authorship in Aggregate: Hidden Labors and <i>Brief Lives</i> .....	159
6.1 Aubrey's Authorships .....	162
6.2 Authorship in the Network.....	170
Works Cited.....	192
The Imaginative Networks of Early Modern Print: Visualizing Book Dedications.....	195
7.1 Why Dedications? .....	196

7.2 Methods ..... 202

7.3 Results ..... 209

Works Cited..... 228

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1. The frontispiece from David Rumsey’s hand-colored copy of Poly-Olbion. ....	32
Figure 2. The first of Hole’s maps, for Song I: Cornwall and Devonshire.....	35
Figure 3. A map which accompanies Song IV depicts the singing contest across the Severne ...	36
Figure 4. The title page for A Poetical Rapsody.....	53
Figure 5. The dice poem on H2v of Wits Interpreter.....	76
Figure 6. The Wits Interpreter frontispiece.....	78
Figure 7. Title Page of Dryden’s Virgil.....	85
Figure 8. An example of an engraving from the Eclogues .....	86
Figure 9. Relative Distributions of Occupations.....	178
Figure 10. Philip Henslowe Network.....	180
Figure 11. Lucy, Countess of Bedford Network.....	181
Figure 12. Katherine Jones Network .....	183
Figure 13. Henry and William Lawes Shared Network.....	185
Figure 14. Jacob Tonson Network.....	187
Figure 15. John Aubrey Network.....	189
Figure 16. Dedication to Hartlib’s Macaria .....	200
Figure 17. Network Density over Time .....	210
Figure 18. Total Number of Nodes over Time .....	211
Figure 19. Top Ten Names and Dedications Per Year .....	213
Figure 20. Top Ten Names and Projected Degree Per Year.....	215
Figure 21. Top Ten Names by Betweenness and their Betweenness Centrality Per Year .....	218
Figure 22. Top Ten Names and Their Degree By Decade.....	220

Figure 23. Top Ten Names and Their Betweenness By Decade .....	221
--	-----

## **Acknowledgments**

This dissertation argues that we should put aside our emphasis on individual credit in favor of not just acknowledging in passing but fully recognizing the work of teams and collectives that produce ideas. It is ironic, then, that this document must have a single author, and therefore I wish to use this space as a way of recognizing and invoking the full team behind this project. I am quite happy to put aside any absolute claim to individual achievement: I could not have completed this work without the work of many others.

Usually listed last on account of the spelling of his name, my dissertation director Steven Zwicker can only be named first here. I am grateful for his patience and insight, and for his willingness to take on an experimental digital project like mine. But even the work of advising me was a collaborative effort, and equal credit should go to Joseph Loewenstein, whose unwavering support and encouragement gave me the confidence to persevere. Profs. Zwicker and Loewenstein, in true early modern patronage tradition, provided me with both intellectual and monetary support, by inviting me to participate in their funded seminars and workshops, to guest speak in their classes, and to co-teach with them. These opportunities were some of the most intellectually rewarding in my career at WashU.

Many other faculty have been involved at many stages of the project. Lena Orlin, Jason Rosenblatt, Dan Shore, and Ricardo Ortiz at Georgetown helped me as a masters student to refine ideas that would become my dissertation project. Derek Hirst and Musa Gurnis contributed crucial ideas in classes and on my major fields committee at the early stages of the project. As a postdoc Anupam Basu introduced me to the digital techniques that occupy my final two chapters, and now he is able to serve as a faculty member on the dissertation committee.



Jessica Rosenfeld provided support and a listening ear as Director of Graduate Studies during most of my time at WashU and was willing to step in at a late stage to assist on the committee. During the challenging, stressful final year of the program, placement committee members Rafia Zafar and Melanie Micir took much of the worry out of the job search process—without their intervention I may have been too distracted by that difficult endeavor to complete the dissertation work itself.

As an ABD student, the *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon* team at Carnegie Mellon University put an enormous amount of faith in me as a colleague. Though the fellowship I took with them was not directly tied to finishing this dissertation, many of the techniques and ideas I developed working on that project have made their way into this one. I am especially grateful to Chris Warren, the outside member of the dissertation committee, who as co-PI on the *Six Degrees* project helped me immensely to develop into a scholar and has served as a role model for intellectual engagement and collegiality. The other members of the team—Dan Shore (again), Scott Weingart, and Jessica Otis—have also been important sounding boards for my ideas and generous colleagues during and after my time at CMU. My year in Pittsburgh had an outsized effect on my work, and there are many others from that community to thank, including Dan Evans, Matt Lavin, Kayla Frisoli, Rebecca Nugent, the CMU English department, and the dSHARP digital humanities center.

Gaining computation skills was an important part of my development as a scholar and has been a crucial step in completing this dissertation. At WashU I was lucky to find two of the finest computational thinkers I have known, working at the Humanities Digital Workshop: Doug Knox and Steve Pentecost. Their guidance, good humor, and mentorship made a large part of this dissertation possible.

As I argue in chapters three and four, the immediate, emotional social relationships of our everyday lives have profound effects on our intellectual and creative work. Graduate school is a demanding experience, and the make-up of the cohort one enters with determines much about how that experience will go. I had the best cohort I could have asked for, and we've supported each other through our dissertations and beyond. These are lasting friendships with brilliant colleagues who have been key supports to me as I worked on this dissertation. Merrill Turner's quick wit, warm heart, and elegant prose is a model to me. Through his work and his friendship, Ben Meiners never failed to remind me that good criticism is empty without a sense of fun. Hannah Wakefield would give her last penny to help a friend, and has given more than that in time and energy to me over the years. And Margaret Tucker's steadiness and intellectual creativity kept us all together during years we may have drifted apart. It would not be the same project, nor would I be the same scholar, without these people.

My fellow early modernists at WashU helped to create a community where my work could grow and be challenged in productive ways. I'm grateful to Dan Normandin, Ethan Levinson, Jonathan Koch, Lauren Robertson, Luca Foti, Annelise Duerden, Esei Murakishi, Sara Brenes Akerman, Lisa Brune, and Corinne Zeman. Likewise my colleagues in the digital humanities kept me methodologically grounded; in particular I thank Meredith Kelling, Anna Preus, and Kenny Gradert. The larger community of WashU grad students read my work, came to my talks, and gave me support in ways large and small: thank you to Deborah Thurman, Samantha Pergadia, Grace Lillard, Sam Smith, Mike Sanders, Josh Brorby, Rose Miyatsu, Meg Dobbins, Kelly Oman, and Susanna Williams. There's not much of a line between colleagues and friends in grad school—I am even more grateful for the friendship of everyone listed above than I am for their intellectual efforts on my behalf. There are two standouts whose friendship and collegiality was perfectly merged and who I came to think of as extensions of my cohort. The notification noise

for Tom Sawyer's gchat messages became a musical sound, preceding productive debates online, during walks in the park, and across the seminar table. And finally Melanie Walsh combines in a single person generosity, intellectual rigor, and technological capability, making her a model colleague and cherished friend.

I have had many supports outside of academia as well. My parents Bob and Colleen Ladd never once questioned—as some parents might—that getting a PhD was the right thing for me to do; they supported me emotionally, and sometimes financially, at every turn. I also want to personally thank Estie Carlson, Kristin Devine, Justine Donald, Maeg Keane, Mary Liang, Cameron and Sarah Sabel, Sean Stankovich, and Ryan Walter; they each know the reasons why.

Though I am deeply indebted to this large network of collaborators and friends, there was only ever one person to whom this dissertation could be dedicated. My spouse Katie Collins is there for me in small, profound ways every single day. My relationship with her is the most important in my life, and certainly her brilliance and patience has been equally important to the completion of this work. I could not ask for a better partner and friend, one who continues to navigate the academic career alongside me and of whose insights I remain in awe. My sincere hope is that this work can someday live up to the many ties and relationships that made it possible.

John R. Ladd

*Washington University in St. Louis*

*May 2019*

For Katie.

# ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Network Poetics:

Studies in Early Modern Literary Collaboration

by

John R. Ladd

Doctor of Philosophy in English and American Literature

Washington University in St. Louis, 2019

Professor Steven Zwicker, Chair

Literature scholars often consider the seventeenth century to be the period in which the role of the individual author as we know it today was consolidated, strengthened, or even invented. Scholars of collaboration, most notably Jeffrey Masten in his book *Textual Intercourse*, tend to treat the phenomenon of joint literary work as limited to coauthorship and either to specific genres (usually drama) or specific periods in time (usually 1590 to 1620). In this model, collaborative environments give way to authorial ones, particularly in Restoration England as the position of the professional author was strengthened by changes in publishing practices. However scholars of book history from Donald McKenzie to Harold Love to Lisa Jardine have shown that exchange, association, and relationality were the rule rather than the exception throughout the period. I extend these principles outside print and manuscript practices as I show that the many social communities an author engages with affect the creative work that they produce, and I make a case that the techniques of network analysis provide an important perspective on the collectivity of literary production. In so doing I argue that early modern literary production is driven by sets of relationships which give character to literary works, and I discuss social relations and modes of collaboration that have identifiable and distinct effects on literary forms in different genres and historical periods.

# Introduction

Late in the 1650s, John Milton, Andrew Marvell, and John Dryden were co-workers in the Office of Foreign Tongues. As Latin Secretary for Oliver Cromwell's protectorate, Milton was responsible for most of the regime's diplomatic correspondence, and he took on first Marvell and eventually Dryden as well to assist him with the work. Though each would later become a major figure in the literary canon, they were not likely known for their poetry at the time.<sup>1</sup> We do not know much about what transpired among the three men in that office—we certainly don't imagine the three of them hunched over a draft copy of *Paradise Lost*—but the image of these famous poets, following along together in Cromwell's funeral procession as employees of his government and office-mates, evokes a sense of the smallness and connectedness of the early modern literary world.

In the long history of literary criticism, not much has been written about this curious connection. Certainly Marvell and Milton are often studied together, since we know their ideological and personal connection lasted into the Restoration, but aside from Dryden's dramatic adaptation of *Paradise Lost*, Milton and Dryden are usually treated separately, even as belonging in two different literary periods—the early modern and the long eighteenth century, respectively.<sup>2</sup> At first thought, the goings-on of the Office of Foreign Tongues seems like a prime candidate for nineteenth-century-style biographical criticism: Among these “great men” in this male political environment, we might learn something about how great poets and great poetry take shape through influence. I do not wish to recover this limited view of literary history. Instead I bring up

---

<sup>1</sup>Of course Milton had published a single-author volume of poetry in 1645, but he was more known for his prose tracts and had yet to publish his most famous works, including *Paradise Lost*.

<sup>2</sup>For a major exception to this rule, look no further than the director of this dissertation, whose recent essay traces the Dryden/Milton relationship beginning in the Office of Foreign Tongues. See Zwicker.

this intriguing episode in the lives of the makers of literature as a provocation toward thinking about connection and the varieties of collaboration in early modern literary production.

I am not interested in the Office of Foreign Tongues solely because of these specific poets in this particular situation, but rather to point out that such spaces for connection and the transmission of ideas, actively or passively, existed all across the early modern world. In the one hundred fifty years since biographical criticism kept scholars laser-focused on the lives of authors, literary studies has developed robust frameworks for thinking about textual features, historical circumstances, the theoretical workings of language, cultural trends, and the crucial critical discourses of gender, sexuality, and race. But despite the many affordances of the range of critical tools now available to us, scholars are lacking the tools to understand literary relationships of the kind that may have sprung up in the Office of Foreign Tongues and in many places like it.

This dissertation is about the many ways that relationships shape literary forms. Collaboration is often defined narrowly, as the act of two or more authors working together to produce a single text. When thought of in this way, collaborative writing is usually treated as an interesting but minor or secondary writing practice. By so narrowing collaborative practices, literary scholars have focused either on the progress of individual careers or on a diffuse sense of the way cultures and trends shape literary work. And despite the achievements of Bourdieu, Barthes, Foucault, and other structuralist and poststructuralist thinkers who theorized the interlocking sets of relationships that drive creativity, literary historians' sense of collaboration following the "death of the author" has not expanded and therefore never fully reckoned with the real people and relationships who shaped the literary record; they have instead focused on the (equally real and valid) historical and cultural impacts on literature. I argue that new scholarly considerations of

authorship through collaboration, along with recent achievements in understanding relationships through the study of complex networks, make it easier to see more relationships in and among literary works than ever before. By attending to collaboration, cooperation, and other forms of relational work, I hope to build a more complete picture of the shape of early modern authorship.

But “more complete” is not to say I intend to construct an encyclopedic study of the history of early modern collaborative work; such a study would exhaust the form of the dissertation, and indeed exhaust its principal. I want to argue that early modern collaboration is broader than previously thought, and that we have limited ourselves by examining only co-authorship as collaborative practice and would do well to study the many other relationships that shape literary forms. I offer the following studies of literary collaboration to illustrate its breadth across a wide span of time, genres, and printing practices. I present these studies chronologically in order to suggest their temporal relation to one another, but I do not attempt to cover the full progression or evolution of collaborative practices. Instead I want to use these studies to suggest the varieties of early modern collaboration, the categories to which they belong, and their important characteristics. Though scholars of collaboration have focused mostly on one or two genres over three or four decades, relational writing practices were far more widespread across the entire period, even as the modern notion of the individual author began to take shape.

## **1.1 A Brief Critical History of Collaboration**

Before I outline the writing practices that I will cover, it is useful to consider previous scholarship on collaboration and how this dissertation expands or even contradicts it. The most important book on early modern collaboration is Masten’s 1997 *Textual Intercourse*. In this study of early modern drama, Masten reinvigorated the study of collaboration and moved it away from being merely a curiosity of scholarly editing by tying it to discourses of early modern gender and sexuality. Masten’s insights showed that collaboration was a worthy area of study



that dovetailed with important cultural and historicist questions. In his introduction however he worries over creating an overly broad definition of collaboration that might encompass all types of literary work (Masten 1–11). By focusing on co-authorship, Masten claims, it is easier to delimit the practice critically. This is a common worry among scholars of collaboration both before and since: if we define collaboration too broadly, does every text become collaborative, and doesn't that stretch the term beyond the point of usefulness? While I think that Masten and others have been too narrow in their definitions of collaboration, I do not maintain that every text is wholly collaborative. Instead I want to investigate the many collaborative relationships that effect parts and sections of literary works. Individual literary achievements exist as distinct from collaborative ones, but no text is entirely absent of relational effects. Certainly there are differences in degree—I feel quite comfortable asserting that the form of *Paradise Lost* is much less determined by relationships than, say, Buckingham's coterie product *The Rehearsal*. Still, when Masten's frame for collaboration limits scholarship to co-authorship only (and more than twenty years later his is still the dominant definition), we miss certain hidden collaborative effects.

Masten's study is also kept inside generic and temporal boundaries that—while crucial for his study of gender and sexuality at a specific historical moment—have made it harder to see other kinds of collaboration. He focuses primarily on late sixteenth and early seventeenth century drama: the period of Shakespeare and his contemporaries that has proven the most popular among scholars of collaboration. Because the writing practices of early modern dramatists were overridingly cooperative, it is easier to see collaborative effects in this genre at this time, though they are no less present in other forms and time periods. The work that followed Masten's original book has shown some of the expansiveness of collaborative practice. In her 2001 PMLA piece and subsequent book on collaboration, Heather Hirschfeld catalogs a greater breadth of

scholarship on collaboration, including work on early modern coteries as well as studies of collaborations within the print industry.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Phillips's book on *Communal Fictions* explores collaboration and community in sixteenth century prose. While Philips is less focused on co-authorship than Hirschfeld, neither embraces an expansive view of relational literary effects. Some of these effects are traced by recent work on affect, like Brown's book *Friendship and Its Discourses*, which tracks friendships in literary production that manifest as literary reflections on the concept of friendship. I am also drawn to exploring ways in which affective relations impact literary works, but those effects do not always take the shape of their affective causes. As is evident in the studies mentioned above, there has been some movement in the critical discussions of collaboration since Masten's book, but not all of it has dealt with collaboration per se.

Feminist literary criticism has been deeply invested in exploring the overlooked participants in literary production. My project draws energy from work by Wall, Korda, and others who have worked to make visible the invisible female agents of the print and theater industries especially. Late in this dissertation I will explicitly address the collaborative nature of female fellowship, a topic laid out in detail in Herbert's 2014 book *Female Alliances*. I also investigate digital and analog ways of uncovering the work of hidden collaborators, a topic that has been of great interest to feminist and queer historical scholars of the period. These scholars point out the ways in which the model of studying singular authorship is as much an artifact of patriarchal culture and scholarly practice as it is a misunderstanding of how literature is made. My work is built in part on these foundations. Herbert writes, "The many methods by which women formed social networks often allowed them the textual or artistic or spatial room in which to further female education and knowledge, celebrate women's skills, and gain financial and social advantage" (2).

---

<sup>3</sup>See H. Hirschfeld and H. A. Hirschfeld.

Herbert's study, by uncovering the formation of women's social networks, helps us better to understand the often occluded ways in which early modern women engaged in the processes of cultural production. My project is invested in capturing as wide a picture of collaborative work as possible and is therefore indebted to—and borrows methodology from—the work of scholars like Herbert who have illuminated the contributions of understudied groups.

This dissertation also comes at a moment of reconsideration for the place of the author in literary studies. While late twentieth century theory focused on the dissolution of authorship, exemplified by Barthes's "Death of the Author," recent scholars have attempted to recover an historicized and theoretically-grounded place for studying the author within our current modes of historical and cultural criticism. A recent issue of the journal *Shakespeare Studies* on "The Return of the Author" took up this challenge explicitly, studying authors not as ends in themselves but as parts of social systems.<sup>4</sup> Other work on authors "in context" has taken root in parts of early modern scholarship, notably in work on Milton by Dobranski and Greteman. Blair's work on managing information in the early modern world also explores the place of individual thinking, manifest in print and manuscript practices, within an ever-growing world of ideas. Along with this scholarly trend, I am invested in finding ways of accounting for authors that do not fall back into biographical criticism. I believe that by discussing literary personality in the context of professional and personal relationships much can be understood about how individuals, partnerships, and groups construct literary texts within large social systems.

One branch of literary scholarship has been, by necessity, far ahead of others in accounting for collaborative effort: the history of the book. Due to the simple fact that a physical book cannot be made by one person alone, book historians have long had to reckon with collaboration in the making of physical reading objects. The New Bibliography in particular has called scholarly

---

<sup>4</sup>See Cheney.

attention to the active role that printers and publishers take in the formation of literary texts—McGann and Marotti among many others have, by disrupting our sense of the stability of a single text, alerted us to the many relational factors that create a book. The major touchstone for my project is McKenzie's *The Sociology of Texts*, which encourages us to think through both textual production and textual transmission as social systems with a traceable history. Much of the book history scholarship following McKenzie has opened the door for my own work by investing itself in expanded notions of authorship and text creation. Ezell's *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* in particular combines the insights of the new bibliography with the resurgence in authorship studies mentioned previously.

All of these critics agree: authors are not dead and understanding how authors worked is still important to the study of literature, but our picture of authorship needs to be much broader than it is traditionally understood to be. I use the term collaboration in this project to tap into the several intersecting critical traditions that have broadened authorship. Embedded in the term itself are the two keys to the term's relevance: co-laboration calls attention to the relationality of authorial activity and foregrounds praxis and process—the work of a net-work, as Bruno Latour would say. By expanding our view of what counts as collaboration, it is possible to see the far-reaching literary effects of early modern ways of *working together*.

## **1.2 Networks as Way of Thinking**

The twenty-year period since Masten's book has seen an increase in scholarly work on collaboration, but it has also seen the rise of another analytic tool that can shed much light on literary relationships: networks and network analysis. Compared to the long history of literary criticism, network analysis is a young field, but its *comparative* newness should not fool us into characterize it as brand new. The origins of today's study of networks go back to the early twentieth century, when sociologist Joseph Moreno first expressed the friendships of groups of

elementary schoolchildren as circles connected by lines. He called them sociograms, but today we would recognize them as network visualizations. Picking up on a longer history of visualizing invisible systems, Moreno pioneered the study of social networks by mapping systems of relationships, giving sociologists new ways of detecting patterns in friendships and associations.<sup>5</sup> Moreno's work in social networks went alongside advances in the field of mathematics known as graph theory (a graph is the mathematical term for a network), and midcentury mathematicians like Paul Erdos developed models for working with large interlinked systems.

At the same time, historians were adopting the methods of prosopography as a way of understanding political and social change. Prosopography, the historical study of social groups and interactions, is a kind of ancestor to current social network study—a method for thinking through the way small and large groups affect change. In the nineteen thirties and forties, historians like Syme and Namier used prosopography to construct new histories, studying mainly political history in time periods as disparate as the late Roman republic and eighteenth-century parliament. Prosopography never fully made its way into literary studies, but prosopographical inclinations can be seen in the habits of literary biographies from midcentury, in which much attention is given to an author's relationships and group affiliations.

This is all by way of saying that thinking with networks is not new, though the convergence of these several progenitors of network analysis did not happen in the humanities until the beginnings of the digital turn thirty or forty years ago. The pivotal social network analysis essay for humanities scholars and social scientists alike was Granovetter's 1973 "The Strength of Weak Ties," in which he argues that more casual or less close relationships with people outside of one's social circle are more important to network cohesion than very close relationships. The application of this graph theory concept to the social world was a breakthrough moment for

---

<sup>5</sup>See Warren.

network analysis: along with the availability of new digital tools for visualizing and analyzing networks, this way of thinking about social systems quickly took root.

The metaphor of the network for imagining social interaction had help from a series of late twentieth century technologies that prompted scholars and the larger public to think about networks in their daily lives. Telecommunications networks, especially the internet, made network thinking impossible for scholars to ignore—as our twenty-first century lives become increasingly digital, it is difficult in 2019 to think of sociality without the metaphor of a network. It is no wonder then that late twentieth and early twenty-first century theorists began to use networks to reason about the social world. First scholars like Bourdieu and Anderson theorized the formation of cultural trends and nation-states as a result of network-like processes, which they called fields and communities, respectively. More recently Latour has used the term network directly in his “actor-network theory.” My interest in how culture is made in and through large social systems follows from these theorists, and my investment in tracing relationships has roots in Latour’s insistence on privileging the study of relationships over entities in actor-networks.

However these theorists, though driven by a desire to understand systems via network metaphors, owe more to the unstructured Deleuzian rhizome than the highly structured graphs of Erdos and Granovetter. Recently literature scholars have begun to embrace network analysis as a structured interpretive method in addition to a metaphor for understanding social interaction. My own work is more indebted to this recent scholarly trend than it is to the theorists of networks, though the two lineages remain interrelated. Collins’s *Sociology of Philosophies*, published around the same time as Masten’s *Textual Intercourse* and a full ten years before Latour’s *Reassembling the Social*, brought the insights of quantitative network analysis to the long history

of influence and collaboration among philosophers. The book, though at times overly ambitious in its aims to track the full networked history of philosophy, works as a roadmap for scholars in other areas of the humanities seeking to understand the socialities of their fields. Collins describes intellectual labor as taking place in a series of “interaction rituals” that can help us to conceive of the collective nature of creative and intellectual achievement:

There is a social causation of creativity, even at its intimate core—the contents of the new ideas that flash into the minds of intellectuals in their creative moments. The flux of interaction ritual chains determines not merely who will be creative and when, but what their creations will be. (53)

Collins argues persuasively that creativity is social even when it seems to be individual. Networks or chains of interactions build up into creative individuals, partnerships, and groups, and Collins maintains, as I do, that these interactions have an effect not just on the state of mind of the creator(s) but on the creation. Which is to say, though Collins is interested in the formation of philosophical ideas, he opens the door for a study of the effects that relationships and interactions have on another kind of creative output: literary forms.

In the past ten years a growing cohort of early modern literature scholars has employed Collins-like methods in various critical studies. In some cases those studies took the form of traditional articles and books, as in Gavin’s work on the Restoration history of literary criticism or the work of Ruth and Sebastian Ahnert and Ahnert on Tudor networks of power. In other cases, like Blaine Greteman’s *Shakeosphere* and Christopher Warren and Dan Shore’s *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon*, the studies have taken the form of large-scale digital research projects instead of a single article. *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon* in particular has had a large influence on the growth of early modern network analysis as a field, making visualizations of early modern social networks available and editable by a large scholarly community and working to educate that community on the affordances of network analysis. Working on the project myself while writing

this dissertation was a turning point, as it sharpened my convictions about the relevance of network analysis to my study of collaboration and allowed me to refine the digital skills that preoccupy the final two chapters of this dissertation.

By structuring literary worlds as a series of discrete entities (nodes) joined by well-defined relationships or connections (edges), it is possible to represent systems of collaboration and to gain new purchase on how relationships shape literary texts. As I discuss in the final chapter, structured network graphs are a crucial mode of representation newly available to literature scholars, but they are not a complete, positivist modeling of all possible interaction. Working with networks reveals certain aspects of sociality while concealing others. To talk of a network poetics is to privilege connection and collaboration over the study of individuals. I argue that literary criticism has already focused a great deal on individuals and on diffuse cultural forces, and that a representational model which foregrounds relationships allows us to investigate the wide variety of ways in which people interact in the business of creating literature.

### **1.3 Networks, Collaboration, and Literary Forms**

What, precisely, do networks allow us to see about the collaborative origins of literary forms that other approaches to relationships do not? In her 2015 book *Forms*, a core text of what has become known as the New Formalism, Levine includes networks as the last of her four major form structures. Citing many of the same critical trends I discussed above, Levine asserts that despite critics who see networks' "resistance to form" as "emancipatory," "we can understand networks as distinct forms—as defined patterns of information and exchange that organize social and aesthetic experience" (Levine 112–3). For Levine networks constitute a kind of ur-form, allowing us "to understand how many other formal elements... link up in larger formations" (Levine 113). I do not want to suggest this gives way to a tautology: networks of literary production leading to networks in literary forms. Rather, Levine suggests that networks are as



useful a frame for understanding literary form as they are for understanding how literature is formed. My method is not simply to look for network structures in literary texts but to explore collaborative effects on literary forms using network analysis as a guide. Which is to say, I look for linkages among formal elements, for connections from one text to another, and for manifestations of social relations.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to thinking through early modern relational literary forms. Rather, each unique set of collaborations produces different effects. My purpose in the dissertation, then, is not to track a single phenomenon, showing its evolution throughout the period. Through a series of case studies, I aim to illustrate the breadth of early modern collaboration and collaborative effects disclosed in different genres, times, and places. In doing so my goal is to show that even though institutions of individual authorship take shape throughout the seventeenth century, collaboration continues unabated alongside it, though it may become harder to see. By investigating networks of collaborative practice, these forms become more apparent to us across the period.

The individual studies I have chosen, though not comprehensive, are also not random examples pinned to a clothesline argument. Instead I have chosen what I argue are key categories of early modern collaboration, illustrating its varieties across a century. The chapters are organized chronologically, though not as a teleology, and the dissertation has three pairs of chapters that are grouped thematically.

I begin with variants of co-authorship tied to early modern intellectual traditions and material practices. In the first chapter I show that chorographic poetry and the collaborative demands of antiquarianism lead to authorial partnership in *Poly-Olbion*, which combines verse by Michael Drayton, prose notes by John Selden, and engraved maps by William Hole. Together the three

men construct a vision of England in the book that is based on landscape and conversation rather than on a chronological series of events. The second chapter studies a collaborative structure that is a result of material circumstance: the proximity of poems in printed poetry anthologies and the effects that proximity has on the reader. I argue that regardless of an individual poet's intent, the appearance of poetry in bound collections with poems by other authors suggests to early modern readers that poems speak with and to one another. In this chapter I do indulge in some discussion of trajectory, showing the ways that poetry miscellanies and anthologies change across the period and what these changes say about networked reading practices.

In the second section of the dissertation I move from discussions of co-authorship and the construction of books to a networked reconsideration of literary personality. As I mentioned above, I believe that studies of collaboration can help us find a place—within discussions of the “return of the author”—for a study of authors and their personal circumstances. In two chapters, I examine affective relationships among authors that impact literary works we would normally think of as individually authored. In the first of this pair, the dissertation's third chapter, I trace the productive formal energies of famous literary rivalries. First I examine Shakespeare's responses to rivalry within the well-known collaborative milieu of Renaissance drama, and then I look at Dryden's many rivalries in the more structured space of Restoration drama. Finally I address Dryden's adaptations of Shakespeare as an expression of rivalry and, contra Bloom, discuss the positive literary effects of negative affect. In the fourth chapter I examine friendship and intimacy in coterie culture using the poetry of Katherine Phillips as a case study. I trace the ways in which Phillips's many intimacies with both women and men make their way into her literary works, but I also argue that Phillips achieves the balance necessary to emerge as a famous individual author out of a collaborative coterie writing practice.

In the final pair of chapters, I depart from the study of individual authors or texts and explore the ways in which network analysis gives scholarly purchase on questions of authorship at scale. In the first of these studies, chapter five, I examine habits of literary biography as a vehicle for showing how individual or collaborative authorship is constructed. By reading a series of John Aubrey's author biographies in *Brief Lives*, I show that Aubrey was deeply invested in the effects that personal relationships had on literary output. I draw an analogy between Aubrey's approach to literary biography and the social network dataset built out of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Six Degrees of Francis Bacon*. *SDFB* expresses biography as a series of relationships, and using a combination of network analysis and machine learning techniques, I show that the *SDFB* dataset can be used to better understand the social roles of authors and other workers in the network—like theater financiers, composers, stationers, and actors—who behave somewhat like authors. In my second digital case study, I explode notions of authorship and influence through a quantitative exploration of printed paratext. Using natural language processing techniques, I extract names from dedications of printed books in the *Early English Books Online–Text Creation Partnership* database. Using those names to build a network of texts and the people who are named in those texts' dedications, I show that rather than mapping merely a network of contemporary figures who influence one another's works, dedicatory naming evinces a long history of influential figures from the recent and distant past, reframing the often temporally-bounded ways we conceive of literary social networks.

In addition to the chronological progression, then, the dissertation moves from the close scale to the distant: from single texts to classes of texts, then to the works of groups of authors, and finally to large databases of people and texts across the whole of early modern print. I maintain that this mix of approaches allows us to understand sets of collaborative practices that are only visible at different vantage points. By working at multiple scales at once, scholars can more

easily see the breadth of early modern collaboration, which is occurring in drama, poetry, and prose, across manuscript and print practices, from the beginning of the early modern period to 1700 and beyond.

## Works Cited

- Ahnert, Ruth, and Sebastian E. Ahnert. "Protestant Letter Networks in the Reign of Mary I: A Quantitative Approach." *ELH* 82.1 (2015). Web. 25 Jan. 2018.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 2006. Print.
- Blair, Ann. *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2010. Print.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. Print.
- Brown, Cedric C. *Friendship and Its Discourses in the Seventeenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016. Print.
- Cheney, Patrick. "Introduction." *Shakespeare Studies* 36 (2008): 19–25. Web. 7 Mar. 2019.
- Collins, Randall. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1998. Print.
- Dobranski, Stephen B. *Milton, Authorship, and the Book Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Print.
- Ezell, Margaret J. M. *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999. Print.
- Gavin, Michael. "Historical Text Networks: The Sociology of Early English Criticism." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 50.1 (2016): 53–80. Web. 13 Aug. 2018.
- Granovetter, Mark S. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78.6 (1973): 1360–1380. Web.
- Greteman, Blaine. "Milton and the Early Modern Social Network: The Case of the Epitaphium Damonis." *Milton Quarterly* 49.2 (2015): 79–95. Web. 20 Aug. 2016.
- Herbert, Amanda E. *Female Alliances: Gender, Identity, and Friendship in Early Modern Britain*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2014. Print.
- Hirschfeld, Heather. "Early Modern Collaboration and Theories of Authorship." *PMLA* 116.3 (2001): 609–622. Web. 27 June 2014.
- Hirschfeld, Heather Anne. *Joint Enterprises: Collaborative Drama and the Institutionalization of the English Renaissance Theater*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2004. Print. Massachusetts Studies in Early Modern Culture.

- Korda, Natasha. *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2011. Print.
- Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Web. 14 Jan. 2014.
- Levine, Caroline. *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2015. Print.
- Marotti, Arthur F. *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995. Print.
- Masten, Jeffrey. *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.
- McGann, Jerome J. *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Print.
- McKenzie, D. F. *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Print.
- Namier, L. B. *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*. 2nd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1957. Print.
- Phillips, Joshua. *English Fictions of Communal Identity, 1485-1603*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. Print.
- Syme, Ronald. *The Roman Revolution*. London: Oxford UP, 1960. Print. Oxford Paperbacks.
- Wall, Wendy. *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993. Print.
- Warren, Christopher. "Network Visualisations Show What We Can and What We May Know." *Aeon* (2018): n. pag. Web. 7 Mar. 2019.
- Zwicker, Steven N. "John Dryden Meets, Rhymes, and Says Farewell to John Milton: A Restoration Drama in Three Acts." *Milton in the Long Restoration*. Ed. Blair Hoxby and Ann Baynes Coiro. Oxford University Press, 2016. Web. 7 Mar. 2019.

# Reassembling the Landscape: Chorographic Networks in *Poly-Olbion*

At the outset of the first volume of his chorographic poem *Poly-Olbion*, Drayton addresses the “Generall Reader” with instructions for how to read the book’s various parts:

Now Reader, for the further understanding of my Poeme, thou has three especiall helps; First the Argument to direct thee still, where thou art, and through what Shires the Muse makes her journey, and what she chiefly handles in the Song thereto belonging. Next, the Map, lively delineating to thee, every Mountaine, Forrest, River, and Valley; expressing in their sundry postures; their loves, delights, and naturall situations. Then hast thou the Illustration of this learned Gentleman, my friend, to explaine every hard matter of history, that, lying farre from the way of common reading, may (without question) seem difficult unto thee.

Drayton announces the book as a complex object, one for which the reader may need “especiall help,” when the subject matter lies “farre from the way of common reading.” The help comes through the collaborative parts of the text that the author enumerates: Drayton’s arguments to each Song, summarizing the action; Hole’s maps, personifying and delimiting the landscape; and Selden’s explanatory endnote “Illustrations,” which correct and expand the poem’s historical information. While there is poetic precedent for a text that combines three voices through poetry, images, and notes—Spenser’s *Shepheardes Calender* being the most famous example—the book copies the form and strategies of other mammoth texts that sprang from the antiquarianism of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. Books like Stowe’s *Survey* and Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* are physical instantiations of Erasmian *copia*:<sup>6</sup> detail and learning spring from every page. Drayton and his collaborators bring this sensibility to poetry and in doing so combine the collective tendencies of chorography with poetic personification and narration.<sup>7</sup>

When Helgerson writes that *Poly-Olbion* “animates the land and gives it voice,” he identifies the

---

<sup>6</sup>Jean Brink likens the index’s encouragement of “thematic reading” to Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*, see Brink, 90.

<sup>7</sup>Though Drayton is far from the first author to attempt chorographic poetry, he is the first to attempt it at this scale and to include in his book such detailed maps and historical notes.

union of the antiquarian impulse with chorographic poetry (Helgerson 143). Where the other antiquarian compendia identify England as a social network—diligently tracing its connections—the team behind *Poly-Olbion* mixes genres (cartography, chorography, poetry) into a more complex formulation that is indeed “farre from the way of common reading.”

I argue that the collaborative composition of *Poly-Olbion* has a distinct effect on the poem’s form: it imagines England as an actor-network. Though its authors could have no knowledge of the theory that would captivate historians of science in the twenty-first century, nonetheless Drayton, Selden, and Hole built a text that exists outside the boundaries of other critical frames. The book has been largely neglected by generations of scholars, often dismissed as chaotic or disorganized.<sup>8</sup> But its, in my view calculated, disorganization can be understood in terms of the twenty-first theorist Bruno Latour.

Latour’s work is actively interdisciplinary. In *We Have Never Been Modern*, he sets up his philosophical position as the synthesis of three critical approaches, “naturalization, socialization, and deconstruction,” represented by three disciplines, “epistemology, the social sciences, the sciences of text,” which in his view should never have been separated (Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* 5–6). He accomplishes this synthesis in part through generic mixing—in *Reassembling the Social* he writes a dialogue between professor and student, in *Aramis* he personifies the French train system, and in *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, his newest book, he opens the work to potentially endless paratextual commentary by internet users. These three techniques—dialogue, personification, and paratext—are used in abundance by the three collaborators of *Poly-Olbion*. And *Poly-Olbion* is interdisciplinary because it is pre-disciplinary, written at a moment before, as Anne Prescott has it, history was separated from story (Prescott 325).

---

<sup>8</sup>For Drayton’s lack of “coherent political vision,” see Hadfield, 150.



Reading these two bodies of work together, situated as they are just before the modern period<sup>9</sup> and (perhaps) just after, alerts the reader to something essential about the nature of collaboration that is occluded by the strict modern separation of the disciplines: namely, that collaboration occurs within networks and systems, both human and non-human, and those systems have as much agency as the individuals that constitute them. *Poly-Olbion* has been ignored because its way of organizing the world looks chaotic from the vantage point of modern disciplines—looked at together with Latour’s writings its system of organization bears resemblance to actor-networks. However, Latour and *Poly-Olbion* are at cross-purposes. Before the advent of modern scientific and textual disciplines, the chorographic project helped to draw lines and boundaries, even to construct a conception of the nation. Latour’s project attempts to cross boundaries, or to make us aware that the borders we thought existed were never there to begin with (Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* 8–12). Bookending the modern era, these actor-network accounts spool and unspool modernity through collaboration: the networked process that gives these accounts their shape and character.

## 2.1 Dialogue in Drayton’s Verse

Instead of simply transporting effects without transforming them, each of the points in the text may become a bifurcation, an event, or the origin of a new translation. As soon as actors are treated not as intermediaries but as mediators, they render the movement of the social visible to the reader. Thus, through many textual inventions, the social may become again a circulating entity that is no longer composed of the stale assemblage of what passed earlier as being part of society. (Latour, *Reassembling the Social* 128–9)

In his 2005 book *Reassembling the Social*, Latour reviews his previous decade of writings on actor-network theory and attempts to fully define his theoretical viewpoint for the first time. He argues in the above quotation that mediators, rather than intermediaries, transform and translate social effects—that the social is a “circulating entity” rather than a static “stale assemblage.” He argues that social accounts must adapt to this movement through “many textual inventions,” and

---

<sup>9</sup>For the direct relationship between antiquarianism and early science, especially the Royal Society, see ...

in the middle section of the book he keeps his word. He dramatizes the pedagogy of actor-network theory by presenting a dialogue between professor and student, in which many of the points of his expository writing are expanded and described. Through this textual invention, he imagines social theory as a conversation.

In Drayton's thirty songs, the movement of the social is made visible to the reader through conversation among landscape features—Drayton dramatizes the English landscape by giving voice to the rivers, valleys, hills, and forests of England. In turn these landscape features jointly construct English history and geography through discourse and debate.

In *Poly-Olbion*, Drayton “animates the land and gives it voice;” the actors in the network of the landscape, physical features of the land itself, speak and are spoken to (Helgerson 143). They interact as persons with distinct agency. These “embodiments of the places they represent” become the mediators through which the story of English history is told (Adrian 90).<sup>10</sup> And the primary voice of the text, the only representation that consistently appears throughout the poem, is Drayton's Muse herself.<sup>11</sup> The Muse unlocks this rhetorical focus, showing that this is not so much a poem about *acting*—as an epic might be—but a poem about *speaking*. The speeches and the conversations are the point; they are ends in themselves. His Muse is not simply invoked and then left off—the poem is the Muse's journey through the Isle, and the encounter with the land is always and importantly depicted as a conversation. The Muse herself flows through Britain, touching on each river, mountain, forest, and plain, witnessing and participating in the interactions that make up the history and sociality of the nation. One river calls out to another,

---

<sup>10</sup>Most of the embodied places in the text are imagined to be female, and this suggests an extension of Drayton's interest in the female voice from *Englands Heroicall Epistles* as described by Mudan-Finn: “Drayton's depiction of queens and consorts is part of a larger interrogation—begun in the *Mirror for Magistrates* and persisting through both historiography, poetry, and drama into the Jacobean period—of historical sources and, indirectly, representations of the female voice” (Mudan Finn 175).

<sup>11</sup>For Brink, the Muse is a focal point for a larger theme of the poem, an “agent for prosopopoeia” (Brink 89).

one plain tells a story of its region, and that portion of the landscape is made visible first to the poet and then to the reader.<sup>12</sup> In the tracing of a network, it is the connections that must be catalogued, and Drayton performs this tracing through confluence and conversation.

Drayton's Muse is a crucial agent of confluence; the poem comes into being at the moment when the Muse intersects with the landscape. The language of intersection and confluence is at the heart of chorographic poetry, which since at least John Leland has used river marriage as its primary episode. Drayton is no exception—in fact he writes two river marriages into his poem: the marriage of Tame and Isis (Song XV), and the marriage of Thames and Medway (Song XVII). There is a direct through-line between the two episodes. Tame and Isis join to create (or give birth to) Thames, sometimes figured as Tamesis to illustrate the confluence. The reader and the Muse are made witness to two generations of river marriage as the poem makes its way across the landscape.

This moment is Drayton at perhaps his most Spenserian: river marriage was of course an early preoccupation of Spenser's. As early as the Spenser-Harvey correspondence, the young poet promised an *Epithalamion Thamesis* inspired by the chorographic work of William Harrison. Though this poem was never realized, the Marriage of Thames and Medway in Book IV Canto xi of the *Faerie Queene* is a chorographic poem embedded within Spenser's epic. It is as if Drayton focused on this single episode in Spenser's work and expanded it to epic scale on its own. Drayton acknowledges Spenser directly at the start of his second river marriage:

And but that *Medway* then of *Tames* obtain'd such grace,  
Except her country Nymphs, that none should be in place,  
More Rivers from each part, had instantly been there,

---

<sup>12</sup>The figures on the maps provide visual cues to the many voices of the poem. Adrian describes the maps as "alive with activity and vitality" (Adrian 91).

Then at their marriage, first by\* *Spenser* numbered were. (Drayton, XVIII.105-8)

The asterisk marks a marginal note for the reader: “\*In the *Faiery Queene*.” It is no mistake that Drayton’s most famous authorial forbear is mentioned here at the moment of the confluence of Thames and Medway. Spenser appears here to highlight the connection between collaborative influence and the confluence of the landscape: Drayton associates poetic creation with the joining of rivers. This metaphor of flow and confluence for poetic borrowing had been in use since Chaucer, but *Poly-Olbion* follows it to its natural conclusion. Confluence as metaphor for collaboration unites the making of *Poly-Olbion* with its subject. The landscape is a network of actors connected in various ways, but especially through the intersections of rivers, which at once connect regions and mark the boundaries between them. In part because of the nature of antiquarian work, chorography makes explicit the connection between networks of authors and scholars and the distributed, associational character of the land itself.

Helgerson nearly describes the same phenomenon in his assessment of the Muse as “that intermediary body—call it genre, community, or representational mode—that stands between the individual writer and the land he describes” (Helgerson 144). I want to amend this statement from “intermediary body” to “mediating body,” in line with Latour’s distinction between intermediaries and mediators.<sup>13</sup> The Muse does not only stand between (even as she stands in for genre, community, and representational mode), she also creates a bridge between the writer and the land, enabling it to speak through him and vice versa.

And it is through these voices, rendered audible by the Muse, that Drayton narrates British history. All the hallmarks of chronicle history are here embedded within the speeches of the

---

<sup>13</sup>As in the quotation above, Latour characterized intermediaries as actors that are “simply transporting effects without transforming them.” In contrast, mediators always transform and translate as they stand between.

landscape: the litany of kings,<sup>14</sup> stories of heroes like Brute and Arthur, descriptions of battles, the arrival of new groups of invaders and settlers. But these histories, as Prescott observes, are nested and told intentionally out of order: “Here, landscape has multiple pasts and knows it. The poem thus offers no one real history, but rather presents nonsequential claims often displaced onto vocal geographical features less concerned to divide fact from fiction than to advance themselves, especially through story” (Prescott 326). Mythology and various kinds of history are interposed on one another through the voices of that landscape. The stories of Britain get told, but in unexpected and contradictory ways. In this way Drayton highlights the uncertainties around historical narratives—indeed around narrative itself—and offers the landscape as the stable alternative to chronicle.

Drayton’s use of conversation among landscape features primarily manifests itself as an ongoing competition among geographic features as to which is the greatest. When Drayton first introduces this debate in a speech by “*Malverne* (king of Hills)” (Drayton, VII.53), he does not allow that there will be a debate at all:

Yet, falling to my lot, This stoutlie I maintaine  
Gainst Forrests, Valleys, Fields, Groves, Rivers, Pasture, Plaine,  
And all their flatter kind (so much that doe relie  
Upon their feedings, flocks, and their fertilitie)  
The Mountaine is the King: and he it is alone  
Above the other soyles that Nature doth in-throne.  
For Mountaines be like Men of brave heroique mind,  
With eyes erect to heaven, of whence themselves they find; (Drayton, VII.83-90)

---

<sup>14</sup>Famously, the catalog of kings in Song XVII is missing James; it stops with Elizabeth and never mentions the Stuarts at all. Whether this is a political statement or a desire to avoid the contemporary is uncertain.

Reading this passage, which appears before the other landscape features, mentioned here, make their own claims to power, a contemporary reader may assume Drayton is asserting a strictly Jacobean notion of hierarchy. Power is masculine, royal, “heroique,” and godly. The other geographical features depend on the mountains for their station. Of course, later other features are given a chance to answer.

The other models of power put forth by Vales, Rivers, and Plaines, among others, challenge the masculinist caricature of the Mountains. The Vale of Evsham, figured on Hole’s map and in the poem as a queen, answers in Song XIV:

But I would have them thinke, that I ...  
Against the highest Hill dare put my selfe for place,  
That ever threatned Heaven with the austerest face.  
And for our praise, then thus; What Fountaine send they forth  
(That finds a Rivers name, though of the smallest worth)  
But it invales it selfe, and on it either side  
Doth make those fruitfull Meads, which with their painted pride  
Imbroader his proud Banke? (Drayton 83, 87–93)

She first counterattacks the Mountains as spiteful and “presumptuous Hills” (XIV.81), but she also counters their claim to royal power as “Queene / of all the *British* Vales” (XIV.83-4), though it is now feminine instead of masculine. This appeal to queenliness is coupled with an assertion of overarching British power (rather than regional power), as well as an appeal to the long history of her reign (“so have ever beene”). As for the appeal to godliness, the Mountains’ closeness to heaven is recharacterized as threatening, a marker of their unchecked pride. Evsham’s own sense of her power is derived not from her closeness to the heavens but to her association with others. In particular, that Vales contain Rivers—while Mountains do not—is a

marker of their importance. The strictly imposed hierarchy gives way to a model of leadership based on interconnectivity. For a Stuart-supporting reader, perhaps this Tudor-like appeal to history and power may have been troubling.

Other parts of the landscape enter the fray throughout the poem, each offering their own claim to power and hierarchy that is slightly different from the last. But throughout the poem it is clear that Drayton, and perhaps chorography in general, favors rivers. Rivers are vehicles for flow and connection, and on Hole's maps they resemble the edges of a network graph, connecting various entities to one another. Network theory seems to explain this poetics with particular force and clarity. As the Muse makes her way across the British landscape, she encounters rivers great and small. A river's greatness is related to its ability to connect to more places, to have more rivers associated with it. We see this in the trope of river marriage, in which many rivers come from far corners of the landscape to visit the ceremony, and we see it in the praise given to particular famous waterways. Drayton provides many examples of this praise, and the Forest of Arden's praise of Trent, using a pun on the name's numerological import, is a good illustration:

To satisfie her will, the Wisard [Arden] answers; *Trent*.

For, as a skilfull Seer, the aged Forrest wist,

A more than usuall power did in that name consist,

Which thirty doth import; by which she thus divin'd,

There should be found in her, of Fishes thirty kind;

And thirty Abbeyes great, in places fat and ranke,

Should in succeeding time be builded on her banke;

And thirtie severall Streames from many a sundry way,

Unto her greatnesse should their watry tribute pay. (Drayton, XII.546-54)

Trent's power is, appropriately, three-fold. First, it is natural and productive (a source of fish); second, man-made, historical, and godly ("thirty Abbeyes great"), and finally social and

connective in its association with the other streams that pay tribute to her, though they come from many different directions. Rivers provide a model of power and prominence not reliant on hierarchy, on a single figure being at the top of a tree-based structure. By repeatedly offering different models for power and leadership, Drayton methodically undoes the traditional claim of the Mountains.

The most prominent river in the first part of the poem, the Severne, also draws its power from connection, not only connection with its tributaries but because it is a boundary connecting Wales and England. Drayton's special preoccupation with Wales<sup>15</sup> gives extra weight to this river, which appears in many of the poem's songs and to which the Muse gives a special farewell. Anxieties over unification probably caused Drayton to linger over the notion of rivers as connective delimiters—marking boundaries while tying the Isle together. This anxiety is manifest in another poetic moment of contest: the musical competition between the English and the Britons across the banks of the Severne, as illustrated famously in the fourth Song.

The dramatization of national conflict as a singing contest is a crucial moment for Drayton. Because his muse never reaches Scotland, an imagined competition between the English and the Britons allows unification anxieties to find poetic release. In this episode, which I will discuss more in the next section, the river is both boundary between the groups and arbiter of their contest—it is the literal figure of mediation and translation. But as so often happens in *Poly-Olbion* the contest remains unresolved. Though competition—between different landscape features, among individual rivers, around large groups of people—is often described, there are seldom clear winners. Contest is the state of things, not the means to reaffirming power structures. Rather than breaking down the social fabric, conflict reinforces necessary social

---

<sup>15</sup>Drayton speaks at length about his relation to Wales in “To My Friends the Cambro-Britains” at the start of the volume.



bonds and allows a national structure to form. This lack of resolution reinforces Drayton's focus on variety and heterogeneity.<sup>16</sup>

Despite this conscious focus on variety, many scholars have chosen to view the poem as ultimately pro-Jacobean, and the embodied figure(s) of the landscape are often used as supporting evidence.<sup>17</sup> The error of finding a Jacobean voice within this decidedly un-monarchical text is an error which Latour warns against: looking in the evidence for a predetermined idea of what "social" effects should be. We expect to see a social world made up of people, and when we instead find personified abstractions we assume they must stand in for a single person (in this case James). But to view the voices in this way is to overlook the ways that Drayton earns these abstractions through his focus on the specific, the connective, the contested. The figures in Drayton's poem are not idealized, even though they may seem removed from our preconceived notions of what makes up the social. In constructing a social world made up of discrete parts of the land itself, Drayton counteracts the dominant understanding of the social in his day (Stuart hierarchy)—though he cannot anticipate our own contemporary notions of the social, nor should we ask him to. Instead, the cumulative effect of these voices is a new relationship between the body and the nation that thinks beyond the king's two bodies, beyond microcosm and macrocosm.<sup>18</sup>

If we understand *Poly-Olbion* as a network, either in the Latourian sense or even in the sense of a set of nodes and edges, the variety and disparateness of the text can be seen as distinctive forces, a source of its energies rather than evidence of its confusions. Latour asks practitioners of actor-

---

<sup>16</sup>For the connection between verbal debate and the distinctive qualities of individual British locales, see Adrian, 93.

<sup>17</sup>Stephen Speed's claim, that the personifications are all "abstract unities" and "(by)products of cartography" that only draw attention to "the voice, implacably male and Jamesian" is representative of this trend (Speed 124).

<sup>18</sup>Ernst Kantorowicz, in his famous book on medieval and Renaissance kingship, shows that the king was understood to have both a natural body and a spiritual one that represented his sacred status in relation to the people. It is this spiritual body that was considered a microcosm for the nation, and the king's relation to the people was also a microcosm for God's relationship to humanity. (Kantorowicz)

network theory to move like ants (a pun on the acronym for the theory itself) through the material they wish to describe, following every connection possible. Poly-Olbion, as many critics have observed, is painstaking in its approach to the particularity of the local and the variety of the British landscape. Helgerson observes that, unlike the prose chorographies from Drayton's models Camden and Harrison, the poem avoids general description of the island as a whole, instead beginning with the particular—a local description of Devon and Cornwall (Helgerson 139). This chorographic *in medias res* announces the poem's dedication to the specific over the general. Though Drayton later incorporates the general within his specific description, it is a generality that is always focused on the local and particular, never entirely united. Drayton's declared intent is not to create a unified or cohesive picture of England but instead to catalogue each part of it in careful detail. The title page does not promise, as Harrison does, a "Description of England"—or in this case a Description of Britain—but "A Chorographicall Description of Tracts, Rivers, Mountaines, Forests, and other Parts of this renowned Isle of Great Britain." I am not the first to point out that the *poly* in Poly-Olbion is perhaps the most crucial part; heterogeneity, demonstrated through dialogue, is not a problem for Drayton and his collaborators to solve but is instead a feature of the genre in which the poet and his partners revel.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.2 Personification: Hole's Engravings

In this book, a young engineer is describing his research project and his sociotechnological initiation. His professor offers a running commentary. The (invisible) author add verbatim accounts of real-life interviews along with genuine documents, gathered in a field study carried out from December 1987 to January 1989. Mysterious voices also chime in and, drawing from time to time on the privileges of prosopopoeia, allow Aramis to speak. These discursive modes have to be kept separate if the scientifiction is to be maintained; they are distinguished by typography. The text

---

<sup>19</sup>Several scholars support multiplicity as a primary virtue of the poem. Helgerson writes, "Multiplicity figures in the very title of *Poly-Olbion*, and the representation of multiplicity is Drayton's highest aesthetic goal" (Helgerson 141). Stephen Speed also asserts Drayton's devotion to multiplicity, but contrary to Helgerson's interest in nationalism, he attempts to show that this devotion is part of a misplaced attachment to community that opposes the more individual-centered work of Raleigh or Harvey (Speed 122–3). As I hope to show, there is an intellectual and historical grounding to Drayton's interest in community, and though it is one of the overriding concerns of this multivalent text it does not totally overshadow the individual and personal.

composed in this way offers as a whole, I hope, both a little more and a little less than a story (Latour, *Aramis, or, The Love of Technology*, x).

Drayton's songs enliven the British landscape by giving voice to its many features, but before readers encounter these voices in the verse they are already prepared to envision of the land as a collection of personified figures by William Hole's lively engravings. Beyond their usual decorative or explanatory function, Hole's engraved maps play a primary role in the text's use of prosopopoeia. His frontispiece sets a complex political tone for the text to follow, and his maps provide a key to the many geographical and allegorical figures in the poem. Like the speaking, thinking train in Latour's *Aramis*, the figures on Hole's maps have personality and agency—not only do they symbolize places, they are thinking, acting beings in their own right. Actor-network theory asks us to look for the operations of the nonhuman. In *Aramis* Latour makes this claim explicit by personifying a train system, and in Hole's engravings in *Poly-Olbion*, the nonhuman objects and places that make up Britain are everywhere figured as living persons.

Hole's maps embrace and enact Drayton's multivocal vision of Britain. They divide Britain into distinct parts which correspond with the sections of the country that the next Song will describe. No complete map of the island appears in the book, and the closest thing to a map of the entire country is the cartographic gown draped on the figure of Albion in the frontispiece. Instead these fragmented pictures of the landscape are dotted with the many personified figures that are named in the poem. Each is shown in two forms, geographic and embodied—a river appears both as a wavy line and as a nymph rising out from it. The maps make good on the promise of the title page. They depict a wide variety of geographical and man-made features<sup>20</sup> dotting the countryside of England and Wales. Hole's maps—based on William Saxton's popular chorographic atlas—show a Britain made up of individual details, of actors connected to one

---

<sup>20</sup>The great road Watling is a prominent example in Song XVI.

another in locally-specific webs. In Latourian fashion, Hole's collaborative participation in the composition of the text gives way to a visual expression of networks on the page.

The elaborate frontispiece in particular has been a continual source of fascination for scholars of *Poly-Olbion* for its striking portrayal of the land as a queenly body. The frontispiece showcases the nation embodied, and the focal point of the frontispiece is the Lady Britannia, Albion herself, draped in a map of the isle, holding a scepter and a cornucopia.<sup>21</sup> Surrounding her are Britain's four conquerors: Brutus, Julius Caesar, Hengest, and William the Conqueror. These four male figures, representing the Briton, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and Norman conquests, would be the central players of a chronicler's account of British history, but here they are peripheral. The central figure is instead the personified landscape, who overshadows any specific event or contest.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>See Helgerson, 117-8 for a description of the land becoming the monarch in the book's frontispiece.

<sup>22</sup>As Helgerson has it, "This new figure gazes serenely out, a confident source of identity and continuity. Edgy and mutually destructive male rivalry is theirs; power and plenty remain always with her. ... Drayton's frontispiece presents the results of a conceptual revolution as if nothing had happened at all" (Helgerson 122).



Figure 1. The frontispiece from David Rumsey's hand-colored copy of Poly-Olbion.

Putting the land at the center of history and nation while pushing kings and heroes to the margins is the same change built out of the heterogeneity, specificity, and competition of the poem's many voices, but critics are too hasty to ascribe this much change to the frontispiece itself. After all, the image joins the whole of Britain into a single body, a common way of understanding the nation as the body of the monarch. And the portrait of Britannia, as Helgerson himself points out, resembles a specific monarch, Elizabeth I, as depicted in Saxton's atlas and the Ditchley portrait (in which she stands on a map of the island) (Helgerson 120). The single body of the frontispiece, then, seems to present a problem to our reading of the poem as made up of a distributed network of personified landscape features. Speed sums up the problem succinctly: the stability of the map contradicts the "flux and fluidity of life" (Speed 110). But unlike what Speed eventually asserts, the solution to this problem is not to conclude that total embodied unity was what Drayton, Hole, and Selden were after. Instead the body of the frontispiece can be read alongside the many bodies of the maps, and the personified figures of the poems, as a new way of thinking about embodiment in the landscape. *Poly-Olbion* works to combine body and map—the network of the text is a body made up of bodies, a single entity with its own force and history made up of many diverse parts. This cartographic network does not dispense with the idea of flux, inherent in early modern metaphors of the body, but is an extension of those same ideas, used to construct the nation as the body of the land rather than the body of the monarch.

A body made up of bodies calls to mind not the body of the king as representative of the nation but the governing body of parliament.<sup>23</sup> Parliament too is made up of regional representatives and, in the case of the House of Lords, those representatives share names with the places they represent. Of course the most famous image of the body of the nation and its ruler, made up of

---

<sup>23</sup>See the long critical tradition of studying the metaphor of parliament as a body (of the nation) made up of many individual bodies, and the importance of chorography to this kind of national identity. Most prominently, (Helgerson 136), and (Howard).

individual bodies, is the frontispiece of Hobbes's *Leviathan*. The *Poly-Olbion* frontispiece does not make as explicit a use of this analogy, but the ideological position of chorography, to reorganize nation around the land itself, shares an organizing principle with representative government. Contemporary readers of the poem would likely have understood that representations of space "could never be ideologically neutral" (Helgerson 147). The ideological weight of the frontispiece, in combination with the maps and the poem itself, separates the body of the nation from the body of the king, leaving space to consider the nation independently from the monarch. This new separate nation need not be entirely unified, as it is on the frontispiece—it can be discontinuous and heterogeneous as it is in the rest of the text. But the work of the text as a whole is to show that this regional network can stand on its own, can provide itself with its own agency independent of a single ruling figure. The different conquerors are forced to share the stage with one another, and chronicle history pours out discontinuously from the voices of the land, as a sign that the history of rulers is not the only way of thinking about the body of the nation.

If the frontispiece was Hole's only contribution to *Poly-Olbion*, he would still have made his mark. As it is the image is only a prelude to Hole's remarkable maps, unique in English printing, that divide up the land according to the portions discussed in each of Drayton's songs and present each river, hill, forest, and vale as a distinct person. No two figures on Hole's maps are exactly alike, and many of them are positioned to suggest personality and interaction. Hills are idle shepherds, rivers dainty nymphs, forests huntresses, and cities crowned royals. The maps suggest the same dynamism of the verse—as if the viewer were watching the Muse traverse the landscape and bringing its features to life.





**Figure 2. The first of Hole's maps, for Song I: Cornwall and Devonshire.**

The modern network graph, usually presented as circles (nodes) connected by lines (edges) to denote relations between objects or persons, is a descendent of the cartographic practices developed in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. When social network diagrams were first introduced by Jacob Moreno in the 1930s, they were hailed as new maps for social interaction. With circles representing entities and lines standing for relationships, network graphs mimic cartographic representations of space. By portraying landscape features as persons, Hole's maps combine social and physical space in a way similar to a network graph—even the rivers flowing between the figures appear to a twenty-first century reader as the connective lines of a social network.

Latour's theoretical engagement with social relations is also reliant on nature metaphor. His direct philosophical predecessors, Deleuze and Guattari, themselves inveterate collaborators,



used the incongruous root system of the rhizome as their primary figure for social assemblage. Likewise Latour's notions of mediation and translation are indebted to Deleuze and Guattari's description of social flows. The same metaphors and figures are used in Hole's maps to stand for the combination of physical and social Britain. In the engravings Britain is made up of prosopopoeic figures connected by the isle's flowing rivers—national space is an extension of this cartographic figuration rather than the product of historical events.



**Figure 3. A map which accompanies Song IV depicts the singing contest across the Severne**

The social and the topographical are combined most explicitly in Hole's map for Song IV. While part of the map is taken up by the typical personified, network-like figures, a large portion is devoted to a depiction of the singing contest between the people of England and Wales that Drayton describes in the Song. In the verse the primacy of each country is negotiated, appropriately for Drayton, in a singing contest that takes place across the river Severne. On

Hole's map, two crowds gather on either bank of the river with banners and instruments. The combination of the crowds—the only instance of real people represented on the maps—with the personified figures of the landscape, most prominently Londy and Severne, is unusual for Hole. A social and poetic event, the singing contest is imprinted on the landscape and judged by Severne herself: that is to say, Britain's contested social space and Britain's cartographic space are one, and the personified landscape figures are the mediators that bring the two together.

The prosopopoeia of Hole's engravings is a harmonic accompaniment to Drayton's dialogues between landscape features—together they show Britain as a system built from the land upward. This landscape-centric view of the nation is consistent with chorographic tradition, but made explicit by Hole's maps in a new way. The figures that populate Britain's countryside form a network joined by physical and social flows: Hole imagines a Britain made out of these peopled maps. But for *Poly-Olbion* to work as a text of nation-building, it needed additional information that helped it extend beyond the nostalgia of the maps and the verse—information provided by a third collaborator.

## **2.3 Paratext: Selden's Illustrations**

The hard-copy book is fairly unusual. It is written in the form of a research report in which one finds summarised, in the most condensed and undemanding form possible, fieldwork studies which were impossible to print in their entirety. So the book appears without any notes or references. This is why, even if the book holds up by itself, it only really makes sense through the proofs and developments that will test it on the site. Proofs and developments which, in turn, will get their meaning through what the readers, turning into co-researchers, might well bring to them. The interim report has the aim of preparing readers, if they wish, to become co-researchers ("An Inquiry Into the Modes of Existence," from "The Report").

A large portion of the text in *Poly-Olbion* is taken up by explanatory “Illustrations” (what today’s readers might call endnotes), written by an aspiring young scholar, John Selden, who would go on to become a respected intellectual. Selden, who worked in the model of the antiquarian William Camden, was concerned with a detail and specificity that outdid both Hole and Drayton. Selden’s notes are exhaustive, and he took pains to locate Drayton’s verse within specific times and places. In many spots he directly contradicts Drayton’s account of areas or events, though he acknowledges the author’s poetic license. Selden grounds the text in ways that amplify its networked attributes. Everywhere he corrects and supplements and clarifies, allowing the narrative to build up around the specificity. And Selden tracks down every possible detail; he “renders the movement of the social visible to the reader.”

In his most recent book, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, Latour freely admits that the book he has written alone, that which forms the text of the printed book, is only a portion of a larger system, supplemented by the *AIME* website which includes a large repository of expert notes and references and allows for public annotation by readers. Latour admits citation and reference as a primary portion of the text, rather than something peripheral—when one opens the printed book they are looking only at the “most condensed and undemanding form possible” of his work, merely a summary of the larger project. He likewise elevates the act of reading to an explicit collaboration with the author(s) of the project—inviting them to contribute to the authoritative form of the book: the website.<sup>24</sup> The project cannot exist without collaboration.

Selden’s “Illustrations,” in their challenging referentiality, are equally collaborative, and they allow the book to live up to its claim that it is “A Chorographicall Description of Tracts, Rivers, Mountaines, Forests, and other Parts of this renowned Isle of Great Britain.” Selden’s dogged

---

<sup>24</sup>Of course this follows a long history of digital editions and texts that allow for mass annotation and easy exploration of secondary material. See McGann’s important work *Radiant Textuality* for a good introduction to this topic.

pursuit of accuracy and his respect for collaborative antiquarian work is nowhere more apparent than in his devotion to the practice of “synchronisme,” which Selden, in his letter to the reader “From the Author of the Illustrations,” calls “the best Touch-stone in this kind of Triall” (Drayton). The practice of synchronism uses historical sources from as close to the moment of the event as possible. Rather than use later, backward-looking sources, Selden builds his account out of the closest contemporary records of a specific event. This is part of his pledge to “always seeke the Fountaines”(Drayton) —to seek out the geographic, historical, or antiquarian source (*ad fontes* as the Renaissance saying goes) and to work as much as possible from original evidence. This approach is consistent with early modern antiquarian practice, which was collaborative by necessity—an author must rely on the reports, research, and travel of others in order to build an account according to the tenets of synchronism. Collaboration, explicitly with contemporary researchers and implicitly with the authors of historical texts, is central to the construction of the networked view of history that *Poly-Olbion* promotes. For Drayton, Hole, and Selden, history is made up of the constituent parts of the landscape, the individual social actors that can be traced across time and space.<sup>25</sup> It is through *Poly-Olbion*, and especially through the collaboration around *Poly-Olbion*, that this network is revealed piece by painstaking piece. The book has of course been seen as a chaotic string of unrelated details, but its approach to the social world refuses to take any pre-existing notion of the social or the historical for granted: instead the account is built fully and collaboratively from the ground up.

Popular at the end of the sixteenth century, antiquarianism was, and still is, a way of thinking about the past beyond the linearity of chronicle and outside the hierarchical stories of kings and heroes. The two most prominent prose chorographers, Harrison and Camden, established the genre on a strong foundation of collaborative work. The joint effort around Camden’s *Britannia*

---

<sup>25</sup>Anne Prescott describes the relation between the many and the one in this collaboration with characteristic sensitivity, see Prescott, 327-8. Prescott’s point here challenges Speed’s argument in the previous note.

in particular, gave rise to a network of scholars that eventually became formalized as the Society of Antiquaries. Because of the detail and geographic breadth of chorography, such work cannot be done in isolation—an author simply must gather information from friends and colleagues who have special knowledge (either firsthand or from study) of the many individual places and features to be described. For several decades at the end of the sixteenth century, this collaborative antiquarianism flourished under Elizabeth, who directly patronized the society and its work.<sup>26</sup>

But this ideal group of collaborators did not last. Antiquarianism temporarily went out of vogue in the early seventeenth century, the society was formally disbanded, and chorographic poetry struggled to find an audience. Still, for those who, like Drayton, insisted on depicting the social world through this specific lens, small networks of scholars and poets constituted themselves around nostalgic admiration for antiquarians, the reign of Elizabeth, and poets of the late-sixteenth century, especially Spenser. In *The Shepherds Nation*, Michelle O’Callaghan describes the group of Spenserian poets who devoted themselves to writing in an archaic style and created a network of resources and influences around the same time that Drayton was composing and publishing his work.<sup>27</sup> And Helgerson recognizes that the body of geographic, cartographic, and chorographic work created across the period, from Saxton’s atlas to the second part of *Poly-Olbion*, are deeply interwoven.<sup>28</sup> As Helgerson understands it, the conspicuous association among these texts and people goes beyond a simple understanding of influence. The intellectual habits of antiquarianism necessitate a networked mindset—when you are writing

---

<sup>26</sup>Camden of course was chief herald at Elizabeth’s court, and after writing *Britannia* became the queen’s biographer in the *Annales*.

<sup>27</sup>O’Callaghan’s main collaborative group includes William Brown, George Wither, and Christopher Brooke, who formed a “distinctive oppositional community” between 1613 and 1625, see O’Callaghan, 1-2. She also recognizes that in 1614, just after the publication of *Poly-Olbion*, antiquarianism had a brief resurgence in popularity, though attempts to revive the society were unsuccessful (O’Callaghan 124).

<sup>28</sup>For the intertextuality and sociality of antiquarian and cartographic work, see Helgerson, 131.

about, in, and through the landscape you cannot simply borrow from works that came before. Instead, you must inhabit the work of predecessors like they and you together inhabit the landscape, like Selden inhabits Drayton's poem, and like the figures of Drayton's poem inhabit Hole's maps. Each of these texts flows into the other through a complex arrangement of literary and social relations, and these relationships find expression in the description of a shared, collective landscape.

Whatever other pressures antiquarianism and chorography may have been under, there is no question that the accession of James I in 1603 exerted pressure on the antiquarian project. James's court, anxious over unification and eager to invest even more than usual in the authority of kingship, directly acknowledged the threat posed by antiquarian thinking.<sup>29</sup> The king insisted that the Society of Antiquaries fully disband in 1607 (going several steps farther than Elizabeth's decline to formally recognize the society in 1601), and he refused to reinstate the society again in 1614.<sup>30</sup> Drayton's dedication of the first part of the poem to James's son Henry could even be seen as a direct response to this hostility, as Henry was at the center of an alternative power base at court, not outright opposed to the king but with different values and standards for patronage (Helgerson 129). Hadfield even suggests that the nearly fifteen-year gap between Francis Meres's mention of the project, in 1598's *Palladis Tamia*, and its publication indicates "caution and problems" surrounding the text (Hadfield 144). Finally there is Drayton's acknowledgement, in both the 1612 and 1622 publications, that he is at work in an unpopular genre, one which

---

<sup>29</sup>In *Image Wars*, Kevin Sharpe acknowledges James's preference for controlling his representation through writing rather than images (Sharpe). This tendency might explain what Hadfield, Helgerson, Brink, and others have suggested about James's relation to chorography—that he felt more comfortable in the king-centered genre of chronicle, less reliant on maps and other images of landscape.

<sup>30</sup>"By the seventeenth century, the Society of Antiquaries, founded in 1586, was not patronized by the monarch. The Society was denied official recognition by Elizabeth in 1601, and James not only refused official recognition, but also insisted that the private meetings of the Society be abandoned. The Society was disbanded in 1607, and James did not favor its reestablishment in 1614."(Brink 86)

struggles to find an audience in the world of the early seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> Selden too got his experience with opposition during this period. In 1621 he was briefly jailed by the crown for advice given to Parliament (Helgerson 130), and his writings on English institutions “supported the authority of parliament and its institutional status in a period where the crown was perceived to be encroaching upon its privileges” (O’Callaghan 125). Along with other young antiquarians, including George Wither, William Browne, and John Reynolds, Selden’s later career trajectory illustrates that antiquarianism, though not itself a political group, had political leanings and meanings recognized by both its members and by the crown (Helgerson 129–30).

As authority figures—and crucially the king himself—recognized, chorography’s focus on landscape, region, heterogeneity, specificity, and connectivity sets itself in opposition to traditional social structures. Chorographic networks reveal the land at the center of the nation-network, rather than the king at the top of the nation-tree. The preferred approach to history is of course chronicle, which reinforces the monarch’s crucial role in the story of the nation and figures history as the successive achievements of kings. Chorography—and *Poly-Olbion* in particular—builds a British nation from the ground, the land, upward. It eschews traditional hierarchy and documents a networked way of thinking about early modern sociality.

Despite the fact that Drayton, Selden, and Hole are united against a somewhat hostile dominant worldview, their relationship remains dialogic, even rivalrous. Within Drayton’s songs, history and landscape are jointly constructed as a series of conversations. As geographic rivalry plays out in the dialogue of the verses, so generic rivalry takes hold in the illustrations. Selden’s interposition into Drayton’s poetry represents a generic tension between history and story, one

---

<sup>31</sup>“Camden, a central figure in antiquarian research and the most direct influence on Drayton’s *Poly-Olbion*, prided himself on having remained independent of royal patronage and of withstanding ‘present preferments.’ By the time that *Poly-Olbion* (1612) appeared, chorography, formerly patronized by the monarch, was regarded as subversive, even more suspect than chronicle history.” (Brink 86).

that was taking hold in early seventeenth century as the word “history” itself began to shift in meaning. Prescott traces Selden’s discomfort with Drayton’s legends, noting that the impending departure of history from the literary is “amicable,” though Selden’s notes are “like acid eating a book from its edges” (Prescott 308–9). Though the two share some chorographic goals, most notably of tracing the nation’s history through the landscape’s physical features, Selden cannot seem to help himself from providing factual correction to Drayton’s mythology. And though Drayton shows some devotion to geographic and historical accuracy, he is far more interested in poetic impact. This is perhaps less a problem for chronicle history, which can more easily separate itself from legend by focusing on the accuracy of chronological accounts and historical materials. But for chorography, a genre that relies on an experiential view of the national landscape, the rise of fact-focused history represents a crisis. Selden is attuned to this in his consistent apologies for correcting Drayton’s legends, acknowledging that Drayton’s version has a resonant emotional accuracy even as he subtly undoes those accounts with his own sources. Drayton, too, as Helgerson notes, in working to unite chorography with poetry, must acknowledge the inherent tension between factual event and spatial mythology.<sup>32</sup>

Traditional criticism of the poem attempts to find unity in the chaos of the poem’s diverse accounting of the British landscape. This approach makes sense if the poem is read, as it often has been, in the context of unification and Stuart rule, and (as Claire McEachern points out), in the context of Hole’s dramatic frontispiece.<sup>33</sup> But the book itself provides a more chaotic picture, of seemingly endless variety and local detail, which has made it difficult to understand the poem as a celebration of unity. But more recent critics, especially McEachern and John M. Adrian,<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup>Helgerson opens his account of Drayton’s poem with an acknowledgement of this synthesis (Helgerson 139).

<sup>33</sup>For the reasons why “no one has really read *Poly-Olbion*” and its frontispiece, see McEachern, 167.

<sup>34</sup>See the quotation from McEachern, above, and Adrian, 94.



have embraced the poem's complexity, showing that the poem's variety serves a chorographic understanding of the landscape, in line with the antiquarian intellectual tradition.

In *We Have Never Been Modern* and throughout his works, Latour has traced the history of and philosophically opposed a view of the modern world that strictly separates disciplines and occludes the networks and collaborations that undergird all social work. *Poly-Olbion*, and chorography more generally, seems chaotic to modern readers and potentially subversive to seventeenth-century readers because it describes the social world and constructs the nation from a position of collaborative, pre-disciplinary work. The joint enterprises of Hole, Selden, and Drayton overlap to form a book that describes Britain through prosopopoeia, conversation, and contest rather than through kingships or events. This approach was unpopular at the time, and has been relatively uninteresting to twentieth century critics, because the nascent modernity of the early seventeenth century was already driving disciplines apart.<sup>35</sup> Reading *Poly-Olbion* with and against the works of Latour, we are made to ask how disciplines combine and overlap in the text, how the nonhuman is given voice and agency, and how a complex system—in this case, British nationhood—is built up from small details. In this frame, what appeared before to be a chaotic poem is in fact the result of a messy but coherent actor-network arising from three scholars in three disciplines working collaboratively. Collaboration was in part responsible for many of the poem's distinctive formal qualities.

---

<sup>35</sup>See Prescott on the growing division between history and narrative. Of course the Society of Antiquaries would be reinstated later in the seventeenth century, and antiquarian scholars would play a prominent role in the Royal Society and the birth of modern science, as even Latour recognizes. Despite the fact that antiquarianism was folded into modernity so neatly, *Poly-Olbion* represents an alternative, more threatening path for antiquarian thought. The refashioned antiquarianism of the Restoration seems to have abandoned this networked view.

## Works Cited

- Adrian, John M. *Local Negotiations of English Nationhood, 1570-1680*. New York: PalgraveMacmillan, 2011. Print. Early Modern Literature in History.
- “An Inquiry Into the Modes of Existence.” Web. 22 Oct. 2016.
- Brink, J. R. *Michael Drayton Revisited*. Boston: Twayne, 1990. Print. Twayne’s English Authors Series TEAS 476.
- Drayton, Michael. *The Works of Michael Drayton*. Ed. J. William Hebel. Vol. 4. Oxford: Blackwell, 1961. Print.
- Hadfield, Andrew. *Shakespeare, Spenser and the Matter of Britain*. New York: PalgraveMacmillan, 2004. Print. Early Modern Literature in History.
- Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992. Print.
- Howard, Jean Elizabeth. *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare’s English Histories*. Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Kantorowicz, Ernst H. *The King’s Two Bodies - A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997. Web. 19 May 2016.
- Latour, Bruno. *Aramis, or, The Love of Technology*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1996. Print.
- . *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Web. 14 Jan. 2014.
- . *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993. Print.
- McEachern, Claire. *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print. Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 13.
- Mudan Finn, Kavita. *The Last Plantagenet Consorts: Gender, Genre, and Historiography, 1440-1627*. New York: PalgraveMacmillan, 2012. Print. Queenship and Power.
- O’Callaghan, Michelle. *The ‘Shepherds Nation’: Jacobean Spenserians and Early Stuart Political Culture, 1612-1625*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print. Oxford English Monographs.
- Prescott, Anne Lake. “Marginal Discourse: Drayton’s Muse and Selden’s ‘Story’.” *Studies in Philology* 88.3 (1991): 307–328. Web. 11 Dec. 2014.
- Sharpe, Kevin M. *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660*. Yale UP, 2010. Print.

Speed, Stephen. "Cartographic Arrest: Harvey, Raleigh, Drayton, and the Mapping of Sense." *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*. Ed. Erica Fudge, S. J. Wiseman, and Ruth Gilbert. New York: Macmillan Press, 1999. Print.

# **Reading Printed Poetry Collections:**

## **Rhapsody, Monody, Anthology**

Early modern readers seldom encountered poems in single-author volumes, as we often do today.

In fact, they usually encountered poetry the way most first-year university students do—alongside the work of many other poets and writers, in collections and anthologies, both in manuscript and in print. Reading a poem in authorial isolation is of course very different from reading it in conversation with other texts. These are not new observations, but if collaboration was a standard operating procedure for creative work in the early modern period, it must have left material traces—physical evidence of group effort that tells a counter-history to the common narratives of singular authorship. The history of poetry collections, miscellanies, and anthologies provides a wealth of material evidence of authorship as (voluntary or involuntary) group enterprise and the effects that group enterprise have on literary forms. These books also encouraged a reception sensitive to the interactions among individual texts.

Because the traditional critical emphasis on early modern poetry collections has been their importance to canon-formation and the rise of singular authorship, the material traces of collaboration that these texts provide has been hidden as it were in plain sight. Through sustained investigation of the different movements and iterations of these texts over the course of the early modern period, we can come more fully to appreciate, to understand authorship, compilation, and reception as collaborative labor. Reception is the key—this collective labor often extends beyond the production of the work. The material text itself, the proximity of individual works, and the organizational approach of the volume have effects on readers that draw poems and other texts into collaboration with one another. That is, readers can receive a group of texts as collaborative—as Latour would have it, a net-work—even if collaboration was not the conscious

intent of the original authors and compilers. As such, these miscellaneous volumes can help us to rethink not only the history collecting but literary history itself; they help us see connections among texts as seventeenth-century readers might have experienced them.

Of course, the history of poetry collection itself does not begin with early printed anthologies but with *manuscript* practices of editing, compiling, and collecting. Indeed, Harold Love, in his landmark study of scribal publication, addresses precisely the same issue of collective readership that concerns me: “The possibilities of interpretation open to an early reader would always have been governed by the wider context provided by the miscellanies, and the fact that particular poems would tend to cluster with others from the same circles. Any attempt to enter that first reading experience must always take account of the company poems were accustomed to keep” (Love 6). The roots of my investigation are, critically and historically, in manuscript. The manuscript practices of commonplacing and of distributing poetry through limited “scribal publication” networks precede and inform the printed volumes that appear alongside these manuscript collections throughout the early modern period.

Commonplace books in particular provide sure footing for understanding the set of conventions taken up by printed collections. Manuscript commonplacing is a distributed networked collaboration, bringing together diverse materials into a single commonplace book. While commonplacing in its more restrictive sense refers only to the collection of “commonplaces,” witticisms, sayings, short passages, and other quotations stored for later reuse, the term can also refer to a wide range of textual collection practices. Commonplace books were like early modern journals, gathering any bit of material that the reader thought might prove useful. These notebooks become compendia of the everyday, a synthesis of material relevant to one’s individual experience. Though it was an introspective practice, commonplacing involved

reconfiguring the work of others: the process of selecting a quotation or excerpt to copy down was a way of pinpointing the most piquant or most useful part of another's work. This emphasis on reusability implicated the author in a collaboration with the reader and even blurred the boundaries between these two roles: the material was not just passively received but taken, copied down, and potentially rewritten into other contexts. As a result, commonplacing developed patterns of textual borrowing.

Some early printed miscellanies followed the patterns of these commonplace books, locating sections and selections of previously-circulated material that could be used in letters, conversations, and relationships. There were books that focused on courtly wit and others that claimed to help readers to woo a lover; some books seemed like extensions of primers for adults, with long sections of classical prose and poetry as the model for different kinds of writing and speaking. And many books also included short passages, such as aphorisms or witticisms. Surely the variety of applications and functions, even in books that claimed to provide instruction on a single topic, was part of the appeal of early miscellanies. These were handbooks for everyday life; if many readers were used to collecting such material themselves, and the manuscript record suggests that they were, then it follows that printed books could provide service by presenting the collection already finished, and finished under some authority, with some perhaps small guarantee of quality.

Though some collections, as we shall see, are more ordered and focused than printed commonplace books, all fit into a larger pattern of early modern collection and the collecting impulse that is on display in manuscript commonplacing.<sup>36</sup> This impulse spans the seventeenth

---

<sup>36</sup>Marjorie Swann and others have made the connection between broader collections and the collection of books-as-objects as books became more readily available in the 17th century. This impulse for collecting printed texts eventually lent itself to the content of books themselves. The printed collection of poems and other texts is a textual expression of the collecting impulse displayed by the culture at large. This impulse was a result of new networks of

century and beyond and is related to the networked tendencies of antiquarianism that I discussed in a previous chapter.<sup>37</sup> Our eagerness to tell a story about single authorship through anthologies—that major authors and works become professionalized and canonized not simply for commercial reasons but also for the aesthetic superiority of their works in collections—pulls us away from another important part of the story of poetry production. These volumes are part of a class of printed books that collect and share material from different sources, drawing those texts into new collective contexts.

If these printed books are collections, who are the collectors? In a manuscript commonplace book, the answer is relatively clear: the reader-scribe. Though a printed collection is created with readers in mind—certainly with purchasers in mind—then the readers themselves are not the collectors, nor are the authors of the individual poems. Pinpointing the person responsible for the collection is very difficult, and in many cases impossible. Sometimes the stationer collected and arranged the poems, in other cases the collection has an author or compiler who takes credit for the order of the text. The set of people and occupations involved in creating these books is as variable as the books themselves. To understand the principles of collection in miscellaneous poetry volumes, we must not get stuck on these unanswerable questions of creative provenance but expand our inquiry to the ways in which the books create a set of collaborative effects for readers.

A view of poetry collections with an eye toward canon-formation focuses on the *who* of compilation, cataloguing the person(s) who created the volume and the poets collected therein.

---

trade that allowed people to obtain all kinds of objects for their homes: “The seventeenth-century vogue for collecting—whether the accumulation of art by aristocrats or the acquisition of curiosities by ‘middling sort’ individuals—was one aspect of the brave new world of consumer goods that emerged during the Renaissance” (Swann 5). Those who collected curiosities developed a taste for variety, for miscellaneous objects compiled and organized.

<sup>37</sup>See the previous chapter, *Reassembling the Landscape: Chorographic Networks in Poly-Olbion*.

By attending to the continuities among poetry collections in the early modern period, the more pressing question is the *how* of verse miscellanies: what are the collaborative workings of poetry volumes? To answer this question, I will look at both methods of compilation and at the interplay of discreet textual units within a book. The sum of a collection is worth more than its parts, and individual poems take on new meaning in the minds of readers when arranged to interact with other works. I will attend to the ways in which poetry collections are a collaboration among texts, allowing meaning to emerge not just from the traditional sites of poetic meaning—metaphor, meter, diction, stanza, etc.—but also from the arrangement and relative position of texts within a collected volume.

This networked approach to printed collections can also help us to rethink what we might call the dominant story of literary anthologies, a kind of “Whig history” of the canon. Anthologies, these scholars say, are part of the commercialization and professionalization of literature.<sup>38</sup> In this account, the arrangement of texts in anthologies led to the formation of the literary canon in the 18th century and allowed some authors to be remembered while others were forgotten. The literary historiography of anthologies usually begins with the anthologies of either the 1640s or the 1660s and moves forward from there: a very “Long 18th Century” account of poetry collections. This history of anthologies is true—as anyone who has opened a Norton Anthology can see plainly—but it is incomplete and it obscures the ways in which collaboration in print shaped the form of individual poems.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup>There are a few notable standalone studies of anthologies and miscellanies, including Adam Smyth’s and Barbara Benedict’s: (See Smyth, Benedict). The best guide to my mind is still Arthur Marotti’s, which covers the broadest range of the material: (See Marotti). I want to supplement this work with what I think is a needed emphasis on collaboration and variation.

<sup>39</sup>In 1934, Arthur Ellicott Case indexed all “English Poetical Miscellanies” published between 1521 and 1750. His work remains invaluable; though a few such studies exist, no one since 1934 has taken on the task at Case’s scale. There are studies of printed commonplace books, of poetry anthologies in the long 18th-century, of manuals for writing instruction, of certain printers and stationers who specialized in such texts—but no study grapples with the variety of these texts across the early modern period. Case was aware of the difficulty. He writes in his preface, “In



### 3.1 Networks and Readers

But before we can rethink the chronology of early modern poetry collections, we must examine the collections themselves and how readers received them. As I have already mentioned, Love's *The Culture and Commerce of Texts* provided two important correctives in the study of early modern readers of poetry. Contrary to the way we read poems today, seventeenth-century readers encountered poetry often (1) in manuscript and (2) in collections of works by different authors. I want to carry Love's second point into the study of poetry in print—when readers did find poems in print, they often read out of printed collections of poems that mimicked the practices of manuscript collection described by Love. These collections would have had a marked effect on the experience of reading, different from reading a poem in isolation or in a single-author collection. Throughout the seventeenth century, readers made sense of contemporary poetry through these printed networks of poets and poems, finding meaning in context and juxtaposition.

An important early example of this phenomenon is Francis Davison's *A Poetical Rapsody*, a book whose initial publication and subsequent three editions foreshadows many of the trends in miscellany and anthology publication throughout the century. The shifting order of the poems is a good case study in how printed poetry collections may have been received and understood by seventeenth-century readers.

---

the future it may be possible to publish a supplement containing this information: in the meantime I shall feel myself in duty bound to act as a clearing-house." (Case, vi) Case's anxiety about the size of the task, which I share, is apparent in this caveat. But I believe that the breadth of Case's *Index* allows us to see past the traditional account of printed collections.

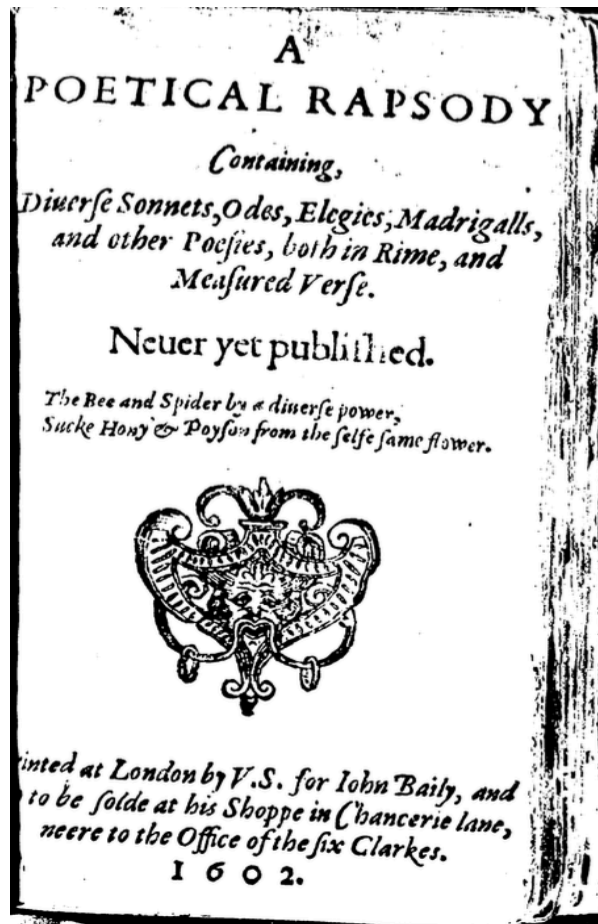


Figure 4. The title page for A Poetical Rapsody

How would readers have encountered the various parts of this book? The book's front matter provides some clues in its self-presentation. The opening epigram reads, "The Bee and the Spyder by a diuerse power, / Sucke Honey & Poyson from the selfe same flower" (Davison, A1r). The first line doubles down on the descriptor "diuerse" that appears in the title and calls attention to both the usefulness and peril of providing uncured material to disparate readers. This appeal to the reader's ability to extract good or ill from the text is not a caution precisely. The epigram calls attention to the precarious nature of interpretation. The text, however, does not display a haphazard connection to its readers, but instead a curated set of poems intended for, I argue, a fairly specific set of effects.

And it is here in the front matter that the book's authorial network begins to take shape. Davison leads a group of authors of individual poems: his brother Walter, the anonymous friend (or friends), Philip Sidney, Mary Countess of Pembroke, Edmund Spenser, and unnamed others. But Davison is also involved with the printer, Simmes, and the stationer John Baily, who are economically motivated to publish Davison's work alongside the more established authors (the better to sell more copies). Finally, the book's dedication to William Herbert might shed light on how the printers were able to obtain previously unpublished work by Sidney and others. In his dedicatory verse, Davison is not shy about the relations that his patron brings: "Thou Worthy Sonne, vnto a peerelesse MOTHER, / Thou Nephew to great SIDNEY of renowne." Mary Herbert, William's mother and the same Countess of Pembroke who wrote some of the volume's poems, is of course Mary Sidney, sister to Philip and Robert. Davison's connection to Sidney, then, works through his patron, and the claim that the inclusion of Sidney's and Mary Herbert's poems was the result of the printer's insistence looks even more unlikely.

We can think of collection as a collaborative activity: the compilation of disparate material that necessitates the collector's reliance on a group of individuals, each of whom contribute to the effort in various ways. But the arrangement of the poems themselves might also be thought of as a collaborative network, and *Poetical Rapsody* in particular encourages this line of thinking in the way its poems are presented and arranged.

Before we look at specifics of arrangement, we might pause here to consider what it means for something to be a "poetical r(h)apsody." Many scholars have noted the backward-looking nature of the volume—its nostalgic focus on pastoral and on experiments in quantitative meter. This is in keeping with previous miscellanies like Tottel's *Songes and Sonnettes* and *England's Helicon*, but rather than suggesting with its title an English poetic tradition (like these other volumes do),

calling the volume a rhapsody foregrounds its lack of organization and its status as a collection of “divers” material. The word “rhapsody” has a few senses that are relevant to its use in this volume. It is backward-looking in the sense that “rhapsodic” could describe recited sections of epic poetry, but its reuse in this pastoral context suggests (as the OED does) that by the early 17th-century the use of the word had expanded beyond the more narrow epic definition. Just one year later, Philemon Holland defines the term in a short glossary appended to his translation of Plutarch’s *Morals*:

Rhapsodie, A sowing together or conjoining of those Poems and verses especially heroicke or hexametre, which before were loose and scattered: such as were those of Homer, when they were reduced into one entier body of Ilias and Odyssea. Those Poets also, who recite or pronounce such verses, were tearmed Rhapsodi. (Plutarch, *Zzzzz6v*)

More crucial than the “heroicke” part of the definition is the suggestion that rhapsody refers primarily to a loose collection. This suggestion of the uniting of “loose and scattered” material is a marked difference in title from the other pastoral, nostalgic volumes that preceded it (though titles like *A Handful of Dainty Devises* suggests a similar haphazardness). The mention of “hexametre” in Holland’s definition suggests that the classical sense of the poem was not completely gone from the minds of those who titled *Poetical Rapsody*, given the volume’s preoccupation with experiments in recreating quantitative classical hexameter verse.<sup>40</sup>

Calling the text *A Poetical Rapsody* announces its identity as a collection of disparate materials, loosely arranged. This title is a departure from the previous marketing style of other volumes and, as we will see, is more in keeping with what seem the quaint titles of midcentury miscellanies, particularly as it is adapted in its three reprintings.

---

<sup>40</sup>We might note that in our own time the word rhapsody has come to refer primarily to music. The book’s indebtedness to songs and song-making, suggested by the inclusion of “Madrigalls” in the list of poetic genres covered on the title page and by the example of Tottel’s *Songes and Sonettes*, foreshadows the transference of the term “rhapsody” from text to music. Indeed, as the OED points out, the definition of rhapsody as a “free musical composition” seems to have derived from the word’s literary meaning.

But it is not enough to say that the title characterizes the whole volume, or that the name “rapsody” suggests disregard for arrangement. The collection relishes its own disorganization in some places while exhibiting a tendency toward seemingly intentional juxtaposition in others. Take, for example, the opening two poems—it is certainly no accident that Philip Sidney’s work is allowed to set the tone for the whole book. The heading trumpets, “Two Pastoralls, made by Sir Philip Sidney, neuer yet published,” and the first poem is titled “Vpon his meeting with his two worthy Friends and fellow-Poets, Sir Edward Dier and Maister Fulke Greuill.” Having already drawn out a wide circle of contributors in the front matter, this first page of the book’s main content immediately situates Sidney in the company of poet-friends, whose names would likely have resonated with a reader familiar with what we might think of as the Sidney circle. The poem begins, “Ioyne Mates in mirth to me, / Graunt pleasure to our meeting: / Let Pan our good God see, / How gratefull is our greeting.” If this work is about the joining of a number of texts in and through the work of Sidney and his contemporaries, how appropriate then to find “ioyne” at the start of the first poem, and the meeting of friends as the first subject. The refrain of the poem echoes and extends this sentiment: “Ioyne hearts and hands, so let it be, / Make but one Minde in Bodies three.” Given the thematic nature of these lines, the choice of this poem to appear first in the collection is certainly calculated, even if we cannot be sure who made the calculation. The common invocation of friendship as one mind distributed in several bodies suggests parallels with the book itself, which includes the work of many bodies in a single printed package. And the book does not let this remain abstract or removed from the specific personal circumstance that the title lays out. In the margin by the line “Welcome my two to me,” the printer includes the initials “E.D. F.G. P.S.”, reminding the reader that this line, and the whole poem, refer not just to friendship in general but to the specific poetic and personal association of Dyer, Greville, and Sidney. This same reminder appears again in the second poem,

where—in the margin by the line “Only for my two loues sake”—is printed “Sir Ed. D. and M.F.G.” We are invited in the first pages of the book to think about the immediate social world in which the poetry is taking place.

But the next poem is by an anonymous author and does not seem to connect to a specific social register. What are we to make of this shift from the immediate circumstance of Sidney to an anonymous “Fiction how Cupid made a Nymph wound her selfe with his Arrowes.”? The poem that follows is by Mary, Countess of Pembroke, a return to the social world of the Sidneys and a participant in Sidneian aristocratic pastoral verse. The anonymous verse between is not like the ones surrounding it in form or authorship. The topic though, fits well with the Pastorals and Eglogues running header, suggesting that poems that are appropriate for the loose organizing scheme can be placed without regard to specific authors. We are invited, by broad genre, to think of the anonymous author in the same flow of thought with Sidney and Mary Herbert. This fits with the logic of “rhapsody,” in which the loose association of verses is part of the point. The generic match might, when reading sequentially, carry the reader along until he or she encounters the next familiar name, and if not reading in sequence, might compel the reader to continue to the next, less familiar poem.

For the socially elevated reader, the next name would have been very familiar, and an important connector in the network of the text’s creation: Mary, sister of Philip Sidney and mother of Davison’s patron, William Herbert. The Countess of Pembroke’s poem is presented as a dialogue between “Thenot” and “Piers,” pastoral names familiar to readers of Spenser’s *Shepheardes Calendar*. Its account of Astrea, the headnote tells us, is meant to stand in for Elizabeth, “being at her house at Anno 15.” Curiously, the compositor has left the year blank here, though the visit

was supposedly rather recent, in 1599.<sup>41</sup> Does the omission of the exact date invite the reader to participate in the poem's social present? Is it merely an oversight? Again we are invited to think about these poems as an expression of a specific, upper-class social circumstance, one to which the reader is allowed special access through the book.

Herbert's poem is also set up as a pair with the one that follows it, by Walter Davison. Despite Francis Davison's protestations about the inclusion of the more famous poets alongside the mean verses of himself and his brother, Walter's poem bears enough similarity to Mary Herbert's as to invite comparison. Both are pastoral dialogues in which two male figures discuss a female authority. Of course, this is not at all an uncommon form for late Elizabethan pastoral, but the poems immediately surrounding this pair are not quite the same, so we can surely say these two are purposefully juxtaposed. They also have a similar six-line stanza structure, though the rhythm and rhyme-scheme depart slightly. The two poems go together despite Davison's avowal that his family's new poetry could not possibly compare to the earlier, more famous material. The book suggests that the reader is meant to see the two in a mutual relation to one another.

The next two poems, "Strophons Palinode" and "Uraniaes Answer," are also a pair, in which the speaker of the second responding directly to the first. Only the second poem is signed by Francis Davison—his first in the collection. Many critics believe that the printed signature at the end of the second poem is meant to signal authorship of both. If not, then Francis Davison's first poem in the collection is in response to one by an anonymous poet—an interesting position for the volume's compiler to place himself in. Either way, we see that there is some logic in the "rhapsody" of poetic material gathered in the volume. Certain poems, by different authors, are meant to be understood as of a kind; and we might ask more generally what it means to number

---

<sup>41</sup>See the note for this title in the 1611 edition at *Verse Miscellanies Online*  
<http://versemiscellaniesonline.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/texts/poetical-rhapsody/PoeticalRhapsody-sig-B12r>.

poems, especially Eglogues, as a series when they are written by different authors and cover sometimes disparate subjects. There is not enough space here to go through the entire volume poem-by-poem, and *Poetical Rapsody* can tell us even more about the past and future habits of printed poetry collections when we begin to look outside of its first edition.

Davison's volume was republished three times, in 1608, 1611, and 1621. Each time, more was added and material was rearranged. By the fourth edition, the volume began to resemble a different kind of poetry collection that would soar in popularity in the 1640s and 50s. The second edition of the book was printed in 1608 by Nicholas Okes for Roger Jackson, which naturally changes the network of relationships surrounding the book. Okes and Jackson—and perhaps Davison as well, if he was involved in this edition—are even more invested in the variability and miscellaneous character of the book than the compilers of the first edition. They increase the number of poetic genres listed on the title page. To the previous list of “Sonnets, Odes, Elegies, Madrigalls” is added “Epigrams, Pastorals, Eglogues, with other Poems.” Perhaps the most noticeable addition to the volume is not a text or set of texts but a new paratextual feature, “An alphabeticall Table, of all the Sonnets, Odes, Poems, Madrigals, Epigrams, Elegies, Pastorals, Eglogues, Dialogues, Hymnes, and Epitaphes, with all other the principall matters contained in this persent Volume.” (Note the list of genres has gotten even longer here, just a few years later.) The table makes it easy to navigate the already convenient duodecimo volume, providing page numbers next to the titles of the verses, and categorizing them by genre before listing them alphabetically. Like the title page, the table of contents privileges the variety of genres, even wears it as a badge of honor. The navigational aid suggests a particular kind of reading—the book allows the reader easily to turn to particular kinds of poems or to specific topics. If the first edition invited readers to reflect on relations between poems as they read in order (and to relate those poems to the specific social conditions of the authors), the second edition provides a



framework for the relation between poems that is not as reliant on their order in the book itself. This paratextual system of relations is even more focused on genre than the rough sections in the book. Alphabetical ordering is secondary to generic categories, assuming a reader might first want to look for poems in a genre and then find one about a certain topic.

But the new material is inserted at irregular intervals, and it increases the miscellaneous character of the book. The most striking addition is in the first pages of the main text. Sidney's poems have been pushed out of the first position, replaced with a number of instrumental, instructive verses. The first section now is a set of epigrams on "Yet other 12. wonders of the world," twelve occupations that are each explicated in three rhyming couplets. The epigrams are attributed to "Iohn Davys," who did not appear in the first edition. Following the twelve wonders is "A Lotterie presented before the late Queenes Maiestie at the Lord Chancellors house. 1601." At first it seems that we have firmly returned to the specific, backward-looking courtly mode of the earlier edition, but the bulk of "A Lotterie" is taken up by "The Lots," another series of epigrams on objects that have associative meaning: "A Scarfe," "A bodkin," "A Dyall," "A Nutmeg with a blanck parchment in it." These epigrams on occupations and objects are followed by "A Contention betvvixt a Wife, a Widdovve, and a Maide," a dialogue on competing forms of female virtue, also by John Davis. Finally a short poem called "The Lie" precedes Sidney's pastorals, which are reprinted almost identically to the first edition.<sup>42</sup> Later parts of the book have similar insertions of new material, breaking up the original poems. Davison's "Strephons Palinode" and "Uraniaes Answer" are gone from their original places and have been replaced by a group of poems by Davison and others that suit the Eglogue section just as well. At some moments the topics are rarefied and nostalgic, and at others they are practical.

---

<sup>42</sup>However, though not in Sidney's poem, the title of Mary Herbert's "Dialogue between two shepheards" is given without mention of the immediate courtly context that was lingered over in the first edition. Without that note, its pairing with Walter Davison's poem is even more striking.

Over its four editions, *A Poetical Rapsody* changes in shape and character based on the arrangement of its individual works, and the many additions and subtractions of material. Its shifts provide a solid example of early seventeenth-century habits of collecting, which are haphazard but acknowledge the importance of assembly and placement. And in several cases, readings of individual poems might be changed by different pairings and juxtapositions. This crucial, sometimes overlooked, fact—that for readers works change in meaning based on their place in print networks—can be seen even more clearly when we look at the example of a much-studied singular work: Milton’s *Lycidas*.

First published in *Iusta Edovardo King Naufrago*, the Cambridge University collection on the death of Edward King, the poem in its original print setting provides a counterweight to Milton’s own positioning as a solitary genius. His participation in the collaborative volume calls to mind the assertions of many—including Lewalski, Dobranski, and Greteman—that Milton was a full participant in the social world of early modern print. But rather than attributing a collaborative intentionality to Milton’s composition of the poem, we might consider the ways in which readers would have encountered the poem—in conversation, perhaps in contest, with the other English and Latin poems in the book. Some of the poem’s moves and strategies may then have appeared to the reader as responses or reactions to its placement within a multivocal collection. If we take this mode of reading seriously, then Milton’s efforts to recontextualize the poem as literally univocal—a “monody”—might be understood in relation to the initial social frame of the 1638 collective.

Four decades ago, Alberta Turner provided a detailed account of Milton’s relationship to the conventions of university miscellanies (Turner). The tradition of university poetry anthologies is clearly very different from the style of London miscellany that Davison and his collaborators

created, but as we shall see they are part of a similar trajectory that makes sense of poetry within groups and networks. University collections were sometimes elegiac, but often devoted to the praise of aristocratic public figures or members of the royal family. When one university publishes a collection, say, on the marriage of Charles II, the other university will either already have done so or will soon follow suit. Though the immediate circumstances of each volume can vary, the volumes generally contain predominantly Latin verse (sometimes Greek, Hebrew, or even Old English as well), arranged at the front of the volume, and then a smaller sampling of English verse at the end.<sup>43</sup> Some contributors provide poems in both English and Latin, but many others will provide a single poem in one language or another. The miscellanies were often reissued and so they seem to have found a modest audience, but there is little information about the size of the print runs (Turner 88). While Turner and many scholars are concerned with Milton's individual relation to the convention—as Turner concludes, it is unclear how much Milton would have known about these volumes—I want to consider how readers might have encountered Milton's poem within its conventions. What elements of typical university miscellanies, or of *Iusta Edovardo King* in particular, might have affected contemporary readings of the poem? Was it read in collaboration with the work of others?

A number of scholars have worked to distance the poem from the collection. Charles Moseley for example writes, “The poem's first audience, in 1637, could not but have noticed that *Lycidas* stuck out like a sore thumb. The collection, *Iusta Edovardo King Naufrago*, has 19 Latin and 3 Greek poems in the first half, followed by 13 ‘Obsequies to the Memory of Mr Edward King’. Some of them are—unintentionally, one hopes—hilarious...” (Moseley 143). He goes on to poke fun at a few of the more awkward verses in the collection. Perhaps *Lycidas* sticks out “like a sore thumb,” and perhaps this is because of the contrast Milton is drawing between himself and the

---

<sup>43</sup>Sometimes the English section of the book would begin with an English rendering of the Latin title.

community. Of course the contrast only works *in* the collection: once *Lycidas* is separated from *Justa Edovardo King* many of the poem's collective effects—its appeal to the work of the other poets, its commentary on the loose genre of commemorative poetry, its (perhaps unconscious) acknowledgment of its placement in the book—become obscured. Stella Revard acknowledges Milton's ability to be both individual and collective at once—an ability I believe he shares with many other contributors to this and other volumes.<sup>44</sup> The poem looks ahead to the individual's (physical and poetic) journey to Italy even as the poet's self-definition is drawn in relation to Cambridge. And while Milton's joint communal and personal motivation can be acknowledged within the poem, we can see this split focus elsewhere in the book.

To begin with, *Justa Edovardo King* itself is exceptional not just retrospectively and not just because of *Lycidas*. The typical subject of these elegiac or panegyric volumes is an aristocrat or, during the Interregnum, one of the Republican elite. And when the subject is not an aristocrat then a long, exemplary life will do. But this volume honors a member of the Cambridge community: a young man of gentle but not noble birth who was a student at Christ's College, became a Fellow of the same after graduation, and was intended for a life in the clergy.<sup>45</sup> The volume mourns potential rather than accomplishment—not of course an uncommon topic for poetry in general (pastoral especially), but unusual for a Cambridge or Oxford volume. Many of the contributors could have known Edward King personally, or at least been passively acquainted with him. Given early modern life expectancy and the vagaries and risks of travel, it seems unlikely that King's death was a completely shocking occurrence—and yet, this event seems to have been singled out for special treatment. Was it a request of the family, the special affection

---

<sup>44</sup>“When he fulfilled the request in 1637 to contribute a poem for the Cambridge volume memorializing Edward King, Milton defined himself vis-a-vis that university and the English world to which he once belonged even as he prepared for the ‘fresh Woods, and Pastures new’ that lay ahead in Italy” (Revard 164).

<sup>45</sup>As Turner points out, Oxford published a few volumes on private persons, but it seems that Cambridge had not published any up to this point save for two: one on Sidney's death in 1587 and the other on the death of a professor, William Whitaker, in 1596—none in the seventeenth century (Turner 86–7).

of the community, or a kind of literary opportunism that motivated the publication of *Justa Edovardo King*?

The title page identifies the subject boldly: “JUSTA EDOUARDO KING naufrago, ab Amicis moerentibus, amoris, & mneias charin.” Many university miscellanies feature the name of the institution prominently in the title, as in “Musarum Oxoniensium” from the same year (1638) and “Musarum Cantabrigiensium” from the previous year (in honor of Henrietta Maria and Charles I respectively).<sup>46</sup> But here the focus is on King, and of special interest is the prominent identification of King’s manner of death. As readers of *Lycidas* know the cause of death was generative for Milton.<sup>47</sup> “Naufrago” announces that these will be poems not just about the loss of a young man of great potential, but about shipwreck and drowning. The title places the book outside of the university context, locating it within this tragic event: Cambridge is mentioned, but as the place of publication along with the names of the official Cambridge printers, Thomas Buck and Roger Daniel. Furthermore the title page provides no clues about genre—there is no mention of what kind of poems these will be.<sup>48</sup> The epigraph below, from Petronius’s *Satyricon*, reads “If you rightly cast the reckoning, there is shipwreck everywhere,” (Bellamy 160). again emphasizing the event of King’s death and providing no information about the book’s contents, as other miscellanies often do. Though it is typical for titles of university collections to emphasize the person mourned or praised, it is very unusual to leave out the name of the university or any mention of the muses or poetic capacity. Perhaps *Justa Edovardo King* signals a different kind of collection, in which institutional and personal ambition are put to the side—

---

<sup>46</sup>We might compare these titles to *Lachrymae Musarum*, “tears of the muses,” the collection on the death of the young Lord Hastings to which both Dryden and Marvell contributed.

<sup>47</sup>See Bellamy.

<sup>48</sup>The second title page, which opens the English section, advertises “Obsequies to the Memory of Edward King,” but the term obsequies is somewhat vague and does not suggest Milton’s foray into pastoral.

this could be a special consideration due to the unusual subject of the volume. How then are we to read individual poems, and a poem that is as strikingly original as *Lycidas*?

We must first ask what the individual poems look like and how they work together. Like other university collections, the book is made up of predominantly Latin verse. The Latin section comes first and is longer than the English vernacular—about 36 pages compared to the 25-page English section. Of course Latin is a marker for learning and the Latin poems are a natural product of the emphasis on Latin in early modern pedagogy, an appeal to the authority of the ancient language, and an assertion of the social and cultural privilege of the volume. Was there a better way to praise and mourn monarchs—or friends and colleagues—than in the language of the ancients? Milton will of course have something to say about this claim, but the book and many others like it is surely making the claim. And *Justa Eduardo King* raises the stakes on ancient languages by including poems in Greek, and a few words of Greek (mneias charin) in the title. King is afforded the full treatment, the treatment these miscellanies usually reserve for a monarch or other noble person.

And in addition to the shared language of school learning, the form of the poems are similar. Most of the Latin poems are in hexameter, and the lines appear consistent from poem to poem and page to page. There are no dramatic formal moments, no experiments in line length or stanza breaks. These are surely young men who want to show their talents, but they show them through execution of a specific generic style rather than in their ability to break out of generic constraints. Through repetition and similarity, the book suggests a value in conformity—King is one of us and we are one. The community remembers King by raising its voices in unison. For this effect to take place, the individuals need not be aware of one another's work—it is likely they create similar poems by convention or even out of lack of originality, not because of a strong sense of

community, but the experience of reading the book transmits that sense of community all the same.

This commonality was likely compounded by the fact that many of the readers of the volume were past or present members of the same community. As with most other university collections, there was likely not a large commercial market for *Justa Edovardo King*, if one at all—such volumes were distributed among a small pool of readers made up of faculty and fellows at the university.<sup>49</sup> The book was written for the very community that produced it, and in the case of Edward King, the inward-facing audience makes particular sense. But if the audience for these texts ever extended beyond the school itself, it was probably in the elite circles to which the books are explicitly addressed. Perhaps there was some patronage at stake in producing one of the poems in a certain volume.<sup>50</sup> Milton, as we shall see, certainly seems to treat the text as an opportunity to make himself known. In general, this is a text by and for elites, as announced by its languages and form, and likely for a particular subset of elites associated with Cambridge. The book sets up a set of elite expectations that Milton's poem knowingly or unknowingly answers.

However the poem does so within the more focused setting of the book's English section, which has its own title: "Obsequies to the Memory of Edward King, Anno. Dom. 1638."<sup>51</sup> It is a collection of 13 poems, all but one of which are attributed by names or initials to an author.

"Obsequies" is an odd word for a collection, and it may be a way around saying that these poems of mourning are elegies—because they are not. Milton's poem is notably the only pastoral elegy

---

<sup>49</sup>The [ESTC](#) lists 18 extant copies of the book, with at least one more in private collections. The community of readers may have been small, but it wasn't nonexistent.

<sup>50</sup>See Turner, "Milton and the Convention of the Academic Miscellanies." for suggestions of this possible preferment.

<sup>51</sup>I include the date as part of the title because it is featured so prominently on the page, much more so than the printer's names (which are featured again, rendered in English), or the italicized words University of Cambridge. In fact, the year is included again after the publication information. This could be the result of sloppy printing, or it could signal something important about dating these highly occasional volumes (Milton).

in the volume. Instead, they are labeled as funeral rites, words said in remembrance but perhaps not adhering to a strict poetic genre. Much is made of how different *Lycidas* is from these other poems, and how Milton differentiates himself from this Cambridge community. Yes, the poem is different from the main group, but it still participates in the volume; Milton as it were writing his way (back) into this university community. The poem is different from the rest, but it is still marked as part of the collaborative enterprise of the volume.

Scholars have long debated the significance of the poem's placement at the conclusion of the English section and in the book as a whole. Is its appearance last a place of honor, a way of hiding an uncomfortable poem—potentially at odds from the official politics of the university—from readers, or simply an accident of printing? There are enough signs in the volume that point us to the significance of the placement of this and other poems. The first poem in the English section is written by Henry King, the deceased's brother. Two poems addressed to King's sister are placed together. Without ascribing too much intention to the volume's curation, there seems to have been some logic to the placement of the poems. It matters less who placed the poem where it is and what their intention was than the effect that the placement has on readers and on possible readings of the poem.

And due both to its content and its appearance on the page, the poem itself, when read alongside the other poems in the volume, strikes a modern reader with considerable force. Aside from the heading pointing to the poems addressed to King's sister ("To the deceased's vertuous sister the Ladie *Margaret Loder*." and "To his vertuous sister." on H1v and H2r), Milton's poem is the only one in English that has a heading, the single-word title *Lycidas*. The size of the heading separates the poem visually from the stream of poems that precede it, and the first lines of the poem seem to set it up as a direct response to what has come before. The repetition of "Yet once



more,” read in succession with the other poems in the collection (rather than alone, as it usually is), suggests as one of its meanings the poem’s position in the volume—one more poem, one more set of lines in the volume.

This one more poem, reads as a response to the images and themes of the previous set. Whether or not Milton had seen the other poems in the volume, *Lycidas* works as a coda to the variations that came before, both countering and reinforcing the previous texts. Almost all the mythological (and geographical) figures that Milton uses in the poem appear in one or more of the previous ones: the Muses, Arethusa, Alpheus, the Hebrides, even St. Peter (in Isaac Olivier’s poem). The rhetorical question “Who would not sing for Lycidas?” seems knowing in this context, and Milton’s reuse of the other contributors’ images—if not intentional—creates an effect of echo and recognition. As we would expect, the focus in the other poems is on tears and weeping: drowning the land with tears is a very common image in this and many other commemorative volumes, as if the poems themselves were an outpouring of tears in ink. It must come as a bit of a surprise then, to read in the final poem, “He must not float upon his watry biere / Unwept, and welter to the parching wind / Without the meed of some melodious tear.!” (Milton, H3v). Tears are all that have been given to King up to this point, tears that have drowned the desert and soaked the pages of the book. It is clever and antithetical of Milton then, to claim that King is drying out in the “parching wind,” but the irony works best in the context of the other poems.

If the emphasis here is on the lack of weeping, and the need for “melodious” sorrow, it is all the more surprising that Milton does not provide any tears. The poem, though full of emotion, seems hardly to weep at all, and this stands in stark contrast to the flood of tears provided by the poems placed earlier in the volume. While this observation has been used to show that Milton had no genuine feeling for King, perhaps this is a point of distinction, as if Milton were commenting on

the very conventionality of weeping poetry. Though he could not have known where his poem would be placed, he surely knew what the common mode of obsequy would require of other poets. Instead he launches into his personal identification with *Lycidas* (“we were nurst upon the self-same hill”), and eventually to his attack on the clergy. This lack of weeping is accentuated because so much weeping has come before, and the end of the poem again acknowledges this. When Milton’s speaker encourages the “wofull shepherds” to “weep no more,” he could easily be speaking to the previous poets in the collection. His poem signals the end of the volume by dramatizing the end of weeping. *Lycidas*’s ascension is accompanied by the cessation of tears: “Now, *Lycidas*, the shepherds weep no more; / Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore.” The rhyming couplets that end the verse paragraphs of the poem (as opposed to the alternating rhyme of the rest) begin two lines early with these couplets. That is, rather than using one rhyming couplet to end the paragraph, Milton uses two here: these lines are part of an ending—an end to weeping, an end to the speaker’s monologue, an end to the poem, and an end to the collection. The final coda, after the weeping has ended, has the uncouth swain carrying on silently “to fresh woods and pastures new.” These new and fresh places, generically speaking, that Milton travels to by the end of *Lycidas* are visible not just from the perspective of his own career as poet-prophet but in response to the work of the collection in general. Though Milton attempts to make his own verse stand out, it plays counterpoint to the collection, acknowledging and completing a collected work.

Reading the poem in this original setting is a bit like analyzing the picture and frame together, except in this case the frame is made up of more pictures. The initial reading experience of *Lycidas* was driven by a network—not just an “imagined community” or a field of influence but the concrete network of poems that precede it. Though the poem seems to push against its setting, its appearance in the book asks the reader to consider it with and against the other poems.

If it seems to stand out, it is because the network is set up in such a way as to allow it to do so—a collection of conventional poems highlights the unconventional. Multivocality can be a function of print circumstance: though Milton and the others may not have intended to raise their voices together, the book is packaged for readers as a gathering of more or less collaborative pieces. It is not necessary that all of the authors knew each other, read each other's work, or consciously collaborated in any other way: the collaborative network comes into focus between the page and reader, converting individual tears into communal weeping and “yet once more” into a conjunction.

Despite the seriousness of the subject matter, memorial collections are not wholly harmonic communal affairs. There is surely a catharsis in a community raising its voices together to honor a lost fellow, but for individual contributors the desire to outdo the others and showcase one's talents as a poet is strong. This desire causes poets to engage in one-upmanship and attempt to stand out either by more fully demonstrating mastery of the conventions or by stepping outside of the conventions altogether. When read absent of its original context, we can only see Milton's engagement with the traditions of pastoral elegy and we lose this competitive element of *Lycidas*—we can see Milton's ambitions when we read it up against his contemporaries, engaged in the same enterprise. To begin with, the size of Milton's poem announces its ambitious intent. The conventional form of the obsequies is usually 50 to 100 lines shorter than *Lycidas*. As a rule of thumb, the older and more prominent the contributor the shorter the poem. Faculty, for example, typically contribute short poems, whereas younger students take the space to show off. Milton, having been away in the country since 1632, was likely a bit older than most of the other contributing students, but as basically a complete unknown in print he has a lot to gain if his poem stands out visually.

Likewise the poem's dramatic elements, as a result of Milton's choice of pastoral elegy, differentiate it from the pack. Where most poems (even those, like the first Latin poem, which explicitly refer to the weakness of the collection as a whole) are straightforward in their statements on King's untimely death, Milton couches his voice within the dramatic elements of pastoral elegy. Milton takes the same tropes but brings them to another level of difficulty, raising a number of voices within the poem that express his thoughts and feelings. Though they may use the same theme, almost none of the poems use a character or speaker separate from the poet himself. The difference is arresting when you reach Milton's poem at the close of the book—surely he would have been aware of this potential effect. This difference can only be seen within the context of *Justa Edovardo King*, but it is the beginning of what will become a sharp pull away from the collective, as later in his career Milton stakes a claim for the poem as an individual work.

I refer of course to the republication of *Lycidas* in the 1645 *Poems*. In this text Milton explicitly fashions a second life for the poem as a single-author text, and he takes some pains to dissociate it from the collection. His headnote to the poem does this most directly: "In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drown'd in his Passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637. And by occasion foretels the ruine of our corrupted Clergy then in their height." King, whose name was the prominent subject of the 1638 book title, is now relegated to the object position. The Author is the subject, and while attention is brought to the death of "a learned Friend," the specificity of the situation is lessened. Instead, we are asked to focus on the author's prophetic abilities, as he "foretels" the downfall of the clergy. Everything is bent toward the author and his poetic capacity—most important of all the poem is newly labeled a "monody," a lament for a single voice. This is already an odd choice given the several voices within the poem (the speaker, the uncouth swain, the Pilot of the Galilean Lake, etc.), but it is striking considering

the original context of the poem. Refashioning the poem as a monody, around a prophetic “Author,” suggests that Milton was quite interested in erasing the collective context and replacing it with an individual one.<sup>52</sup>

In doing this Milton (and/or Moseley) does not so much erase the previous context as recognize that the context existed and now that the poem appears alongside new works (of Milton alone) it must behave somewhat differently. In his recent article on the 1645 *Poems*, Steven Zwicker reminds us of both the collaborative creation of the text, through the uneasy Moseley-Milton partnership and especially the collaborative reception of the text in a marketplace of books recorded in the Thomason Tracts: “Contemporary habits of reading governed the reception of a very diverse world of texts” (Zwicker 243). For the 1645 volume this diverse world includes both the other texts at booksellers’ stalls in 1646 and the individual poems that play against one another in the book itself<sup>53</sup>—for *Justa Edovardo King* it includes both the other poems of the collection and the other Oxford and Cambridge collections. In both volumes, Milton must have known he was entering into a collaborative enterprise of some kind, but it is impossible to know Milton’s exact intentions for *Lycidas* as it entered these contexts. What we do know is that in both cases readers received the poem according to these collective conditions and that their reading and interpretation was no doubt affected by these various collaborations.

---

<sup>52</sup>Incidentally, the only other major change between the 1638 and 1645 editions is the change in line 128-9 from “Besides what the grimme wolf with privy paw / Daily devoures apace, and little said” (Milton, 11r) to “nothing said” in the 1645 edition. This reference, either to the Laudians or to the Roman Catholic church, goes along with Milton’s celebration of his own prophetic abilities, so it seems logical he would have been more forward here to highlight the effect. What’s more, it seems that “nothing” was the original in the Trinity Manuscript, crossed out and changed to “little” for the 1638 volume, and then back again in 1645 (Hughes et al. 686). Milton or his editors made adjustments to suit the political conditions of the time and his own self-promotion.

<sup>53</sup>Furthermore, John Hale suggests that the 1645 *Poems* may have been indebted to collections in form as well as content: “The balancing of English with ancient tongues is found in *Justa Edovardo King* (1638), to which Milton had of course contributed *Lycidas*, so that we might guess he drew thence the idea for his own bilingual volume” (Hale 21).

Comparing these two editions of the poem reveal *Lycidas* to be a vehicle of the poet's ambitions, not just relative to his poetic career and poetic forebears (Virgil, Spenser, Jonson, etc.), but in direct relation to his young competitors at Cambridge and elsewhere. *Justa Edovardo King* highlights the striving Milton, who skillfully adapts the conventions of printed obsequy to the perhaps more high-minded genre of pastoral elegy. The Milton of *Justa Edovardo King* is a Milton of contest and collaboration. Contest in his eagerness—and many would say his success—to outdo the other poets in the collection, and collaboration in the way the poem was likely read and received in its original context. No amount of wallpapering over the poem with the term “monody” can erase these multivocal effects—evident in Milton's use of the tropes of funerary poetry, the poem's length, its title, its eventual headnote, and its seeming explicit references to its place among the other poems. In taking Milton at his 1645 word and ignoring the 1638 volume, we risk ignoring important elements of early modern reading that are at odds with our own—the encounter of a poem within a multi-author collection and (even more rare) the encounter with Milton having never heard of him before. When we look at the poem in this way, askance from our normal approach, we find a work surely attuned to and in contest with the work around it, just as Milton remained so attuned to his contemporary world throughout his life.

The example of *Justa Edovardo King* demonstrates the potential of a modest collection to steer the reading of even the most independent-seeming poetry. In the latter half of the seventeenth century, publishers exploited this tendency to all sorts of aesthetic, economic, and political ends. Simultaneously with university poetry collections, commercial miscellanies produced in London engaged readers in a wider range of material, wrapping poetry in broader networks of form and function. With regard to Davison and Milton, poems in those collections were read against the others in terms of genre, authorship, and relative prestige. In the more freewheeling midcentury collections, the network effect was often a function of topic or theme.

The first and biggest difference between these collections and late Elizabethan ones like *Poetical Rapsody* (or university anthologies) is their inclusion of prose. No longer limited to verse alone, these books often move back and forth between snippets of prose and verse, making for even more miscellaneous collections, more like a commonplace book than the early editions *A Poetical Rapsody*. The prose, like the verse, is usually taken from different writers and different sources, often fitting the instructional theme of the volume. Many of these early volumes, as Smyth points out, are designed to train the reader in courtly behavior (Smyth). However, the readers of these volumes would not likely have been courtly. Rather, collections like *The Academy of Complements* sold an impression of courtly life to non-noble readers, providing a peek into that world while perhaps being a guide for working a more rarefied vocabulary into their daily lives (Smyth). Poems within these collections, then, would have been read—at least in part—in terms of what skills or functions they could impart to the reader.

Collections like the 1641 *Wits' Interpreter* volume advertised the ability to train its readers in different kinds of communication: spoken, written, and a third register we might call the poetic. It was in the service of this ostensible goal that the materials in the book were marshalled. Snippets of prose from classical texts (usually translations) promised to teach great oratory and improve letter writing, brief epigrams and witticisms promised to help the reader navigate daily conversation, and sections of verse, recited or read properly, could ostensibly assist in the wooing of a lover. *Wits' Interpreter* promises all these things and more. The title page divides the volume into 8 sections. They are:

1. The Art of Reasoning, a new Logick.
2. Theatre of Courtship, Accurate Complements.
3. The Labyrinth of Fancies, New Experiments and Inventions.
4. Apollo and Orpheus severall Love-Songs, Epigrams, Drolleries, and other Verses.

5. Cyprian Goddess, Description of Beauty.
6. The Muses Elizium, several Poeticall Fictions,
7. The perfect Inditer, Letters Ala-mode.
8. Cardinal Richeleiu's Key to his manner of writing of Letters by Cyphers.

This list does not suggest a progression, exactly, but it forms different categories. The book begins with ways of thinking (reason and logic, which covers grammar as much as anything—more on that later), and ways of speaking (complements and fancies). It ends with written communication both direct (writing effective quasi-public letters) and indirect (disguising the content of letters within codes). In between the thought-and-spoken and the written comes the section that caused Case to classify this as a “poetical” miscellany. Poetry sits between these two more instructive topics, suggesting that artistic delight and daily usefulness might both be found in the lines of verse. However, as we saw with previous volumes, the table of contents proposes a structure that does not accurately describe the book. Some of the sections, especially five and six, seem to be missing entirely; others have elements that are not described in the contents.

Nevertheless, these volumes represented an attempt rhapsodically to combine diverse material into a coherent whole that could assist readers, or at least offer them the illusion of usefulness. When a reader encountered the line “My joyes are dark, but clear are seen my woes,” (Cotgrave, H2r) she may not have been thinking of the William Barley poem “Short is my rest,” but it seems likely she would have thought of using the line in dialogue with a lover, as part of courtship or even a game. The following poem puts verse into precisely these two contexts, allowing woodcuts of dice to share page real estate with rhyming verse:



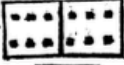









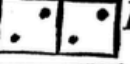


100 *Wits Interpreter, or*  
 Come let us cast the Dice who shall drink,  
 mine is  and his   
 and  is thine  
 & he threw  &  thats nine  
 Come away   
 is fair play,  
 is your throw Sir,  
 they run low Sir,  
 I see  
 is but three  
 O where is the Wine come fill up the  
 Glasse,  
 For here is the Man that hath  
 thrown 

Figure 5. The dice poem on H2v of *Wits Interpreter*

In this poem, as in so many of the poetic texts included in commercial miscellanies, the chief context was not poetic invention but readerly function, which used the juxtaposition of different kinds of poetry with prose, images, and other devices to create a volume that was useful or intriguing to the reader in their daily life, rather than enriching or ennobling in a literary sense. These collections often recontextualized work that may have been written in a literary context (as the line from “Short is my rest” may have been) into new networked relationships based on the kind of collections in which they appeared and the other texts or functions that appeared with them.

From a commercial standpoint, the makers of *Wits Interpreter* remained interested in well-known authorial figures in service of their functional, everyday volume. In the book's famous engraved frontispiece, the leading lights of the English literary tradition—Shakespeare, Spenser, Jonson, Bacon, etc.—appear alongside the muses and personified representations of drollery. The portraits include an image of Cardinal Richelieu, the supposed originator of the book's "secret code" section. The marquee names of English literature are certainly important to the way the book, with its subtitle "The English Parnassus," attempts to sell itself, but they are meant to be understood within the larger context of the book's function, in which the muses and drollery operate side by side. The accumulation of literary figures, then, is one of many marketing strategies, rather than a primary aim.



Figure 6. The Witts Interpreter frontispiece

Later in the century, literary fame as marketing tool became a hallmark of the successful anthologies of the 1680s and 1690s. Though these books do not include the prose and other non-poetic material of the midcentury collections, the tendency to accumulate as many famous names as possible flourishes. In these volumes, we witness a kind of reverse effect to the network phenomenon in *Justa Edovardo King*. In that collection, Milton manages to distinguish himself, semi-anonymously, by playing with and against the conventions of the collection. In these

volumes, poems which may have no connection with a particular famous name, capture some authority and recognition through proximity to fame or outright misattribution.

An early example of this effect can be seen in the 1689 volume *A Collection of Poems on Affairs of State*, which includes a number of poems thought at the time to be Marvell's as well as the Waller, Sprat, and Dryden verses from 1659's "Three Poems" on the death of Oliver Cromwell. In this collection, the poem "Britannia and Raleigh" is mistakenly attributed to Marvell, when it seems instead to have been written by his friend John Ayloffe (Ayloffe). The poem, a dialogue between the two title figures, dramatizes Britain's complaints to Raleigh of the excesses and absolutism of Charles I. It is nostalgic for Elizabeth's reign and expresses admiration for Spenser (Marvell, A4r). Britannia sees Venice as the best model for a new English government:

To the serene *Venetian* State I'll go,  
From her sage Mouth fam'd Principle to know;  
With her, the prudence of the ancients read,  
To teach my people in their steps to tread;  
By their great Pattern such a State I'll frame,  
Shall eternize a glorious lasting Name. (Marvell, B1r)

Passages like this one might be taken differently if the reader assumes the author is Marvell, and if she reads the poem alongside other topical Marvell texts. The political point of view shares much with Marvell's parliamentary sympathies, but the specific reference to the Venetian republic might carry more weight if one assumes the lines were written by Marvell, the famed MP. The nostalgic reference to Spenser might have the opposite effect, unintentionally enhancing the reader's understanding of where Marvell positions himself as a poet. In the

network of this text, “Britannia and Raleigh” is both reinforced by and reinforces its mistaken attribution, allowing the reader to find Marvellian connections that do not exist.

Collecting poems according to political affiliation was a common practice in the late seventeenth century, as more partisan poetry collections appeared to bolster one side or another in the debates of the day. Collections such as *Rome Rhym’d to Death* (1683) and *A Collection... Against Popery and Tyranny* (1689), as well as others that advertised “Loyal Songs,” bound poems to a specific political point-of-view. Readers of these volumes would not be faulted for finding politics in verses that in another context would be found apolitical. Of course, the ideological bent of these volumes was louder in the 1680s and 90s, but it was nothing new: Davison’s volume, with its openly nostalgic view of Elizabeth’s reign and Sidney’s poetics, had its own political ideology. The effect is similar in the political collections of both periods: poems get drawn into the political orbit of the collector’s framing, and readers encounter these poems differently within such a context.

The undisputed master of late-seventeenth-century collections was Jacob Tonson, who used political ideology and a host of other tools as leverage to sell his many poetry anthologies. In his *Poems on Affairs of State* series, beginning in 1697, Tonson eschews simple partisanship—he is not “against popery and tyranny” persay—for a more general interest in poetry that comments on political events, “affairs of state,” that could potentially appeal to a wider audience. The original title is “POEMS ON Affairs of State: FROM The Time of Oliver Cromwell, to the Abdication of K. James the Second. Written by the greatest Wits of the Age.” The book covers a limited amount of time with a set end-date almost ten years prior to the date of publication, bookended by two political events. The title page lists and mixes famous names with relish, among them

Buckingham, Rochester, Milton, Dryden, Marvell, and Waller.<sup>54</sup> The book asks the reader to imagine these authors, whose political, social, and aesthetic motives are vastly different from each other, as engaged in a joint enterprise: poetic commentary on political events during a tumultuous period in British history. We may be invited to think about these poets as oppositional, but their opposition is, in the 1690s, a matter of historical interest rather than political urgency. Instead, these “greatest Wits of the Age” define and express this difficult recent past by raising their voices together. The poems are organized mostly in chronological order, and many of the poems are assigned to specific dates—as “*The Impartial Trimmer, 1682*”—, to suggest a year-by-year account of the political climate. But poems like Buckingham’s dignified “An Epitaph on the Lord Fairfax” and Rochester’s salacious satire on Charles II scarcely belong together in terms subject matter, tone, or politics. Nonetheless the book draws them into a kind of collaboration, for the reader, as commentary on important recent events and as a way of understanding the tumultuous political past. For readers of this volume, and perhaps for Tonson, Buckingham and Rochester are engaged in a joint enterprise of making sense of shifting alliances and changing political and social circumstances.

Likewise other poems found in the volume are drawn into a state of coherence they might not possess on their own. The collection begins, like the other “affairs of state” volumes, with some of Marvell’s works and Dryden, Waller, and Sprat’s “Three Poems” on Cromwell’s death. Many different kinds of poetry (including the above verses by Rochester and Buckingham) intervene, but the volume ends with “An Answer to Mr. Waller’s Poem on Oliver’s Death; called the Storm: written by Sir W—— G——” (*Poems on Affairs of State from the Time of Oliver*

---

<sup>54</sup>Tonson’s “financial imperatives as a publisher were at one with his need for cultural standing (a precondition for further commercial success as a literary publisher), and fitted neatly with his long-standing relationship with Dryden” (Barnard, “Dryden, Tonson, and the Patrons of The Works of Virgil (1697)” 176).

*Cromwell to the Abdication of K. James the Second*, A8r).<sup>55</sup> This bookending of poems commenting on the same event signals to the reader that the volume is made of up individual works intended to converse with one another, drawing Buckingham, Rochester, Marvell, Dryden, Milton, and others into a conversation on the events of days past.

As time goes on, these volumes change in shape and character: there were at least 14 separate editions of this text, many of them billed as subsequent parts or volumes. As such, the collection of individual poems takes many twists and turns—some texts travel easily from volume to volume, while others appear more irregularly. Likewise, the “Affairs of State” label attached to these poems finds itself stretched around allegorical works that could easily be applied to any number of situations, and these poems appear alongside others that are explicit in their relation to a specific event. What results is a volume that purports to be about the state but actually spans a wide range of poetic discourse, much like the volumes from the century that preceded it, and what remains the same is the way these works are drawn into a conversation with one another.

We see this tendency in Tonson’s other, earlier collections as well; he seems intent on drawing disparate authors together. Consider by far the most republished poetry collection of the 1680s: Jacob Tonson’s 1685 “Miscellany Poems. Containing a New TRANSLATION OF VIRGILLS Eclogues, OVID’S Love Elegies, Odes of HORACE, And OTHER AUTHORS; WITH SEVERAL ORIGINAL POEMS. By the most Eminent Hands.” Case records 26 subsequent reprintings of this volume throughout the 1690s and early eighteenth century. Some of these are simply reprinted versions of the original collection, while others are sequels, part of a yearly miscellany series Tonson started after the success of the early volumes (more on that later). Note the simultaneous backward- and forward-looking elements of the title. The advertised texts are

---

<sup>55</sup>The volume includes two “addenda,” Rochester’s “The Perfect Enjoyment” and “A Satire Against Marriage,” but presumably these were, as the table of contents claims, added later and not part of the original plan for the volume.

all classical, but the emphasis is on their new translations—and a few original poems—done by the “most Eminent Hands.” In part, of course, the volume is a vehicle for the translation work of Dryden, Tonson’s close collaborator. So we find the newness of the translation coupled with the fame of the translators and of course the fame of classical authors.

The yearly miscellanies justify the combination of old and new not as an act of collaboration per se but as an act of preservation. Tonson lays out this justification in his address to the reader in the third edition:

I would likewise willingly try if there could be an Annual Miscellany, which I believe might be an use-ful diversion to the Ingenious. By this means care would be taken to preserve ev’ry Choice Copy that appears; whereas I have known several Celebrated Pieces so utterly lost in three or four years time after they were written, as not to be recoverable by all the search I cou’d make after ’em. (Tate, B7v)

Elsewhere in the letter, Tonson brags about all the contributors who have offered texts to him, so many that “the Book wou’d have swell’d to too great a bulk” (Tate, B7r). Tonson’s preface appeals not just to the popularity of the volumes—by both authors and readers—but to the act of preserving certain texts as a good in itself. Tonson raises the specter of three or four years being enough to make texts unrecoverable.<sup>56</sup> Tonson’s emphasis on preservation reveals how he feels about his roll as stationer. He preserves important works in addition to curating and selling them. The relation of works within a particular annual miscellany, therefore, might be that each individual work, in that moment in time, is deserving of preservation. While this might lead some readers to experience each poem as an individual preserved artifact or curiosity, in general the claim of preservation can be used to tie disparate works together. Tonson signals that these works belong together because they are important and because together they have something important to say about the present moment.

---

<sup>56</sup>Anyone who has encountered a dead hyperlink from 2010 can surely relate.



Tonson's tendency toward preservation—as altruism, marketing strategy, or both—lends itself to one of the marquee projects of his and Dryden's late career: the translation of the works of Virgil. This ostensibly single-author text by a prominent publisher of collections resembles a collection in its form and content. Though not technically a collection of works by different authors, the project spans many different groups of contributors and collaborators. First and foremost are the three figures emphasized on the title page—Dryden, Tonson, and Virgil. Virgil's collaboration is of course not voluntary, but he is nonetheless an important presence in the volume, having contributed the lion's share of the text. Beyond these three, we might say “authorial,” figures are those who contributed to the paratext, including Chetwood and Addison who provided biographical and bibliographical commentary that make up large portions of the text. Finally, Dryden drew in a great many more people through his lengthy dedications. There are of course the three separate dedicatees for each of the three sections—Hugh Lord Clifford; Philip, Earl of Chesterfield; and John Sheffield, Marquess of Normanby—, but there are also the numerous writers and public figures he mentions as having bearing on the project at hand. Dryden and Tonson clearly saw the project as of national importance, and therefore the book became a compendium of English social and poetic relations.

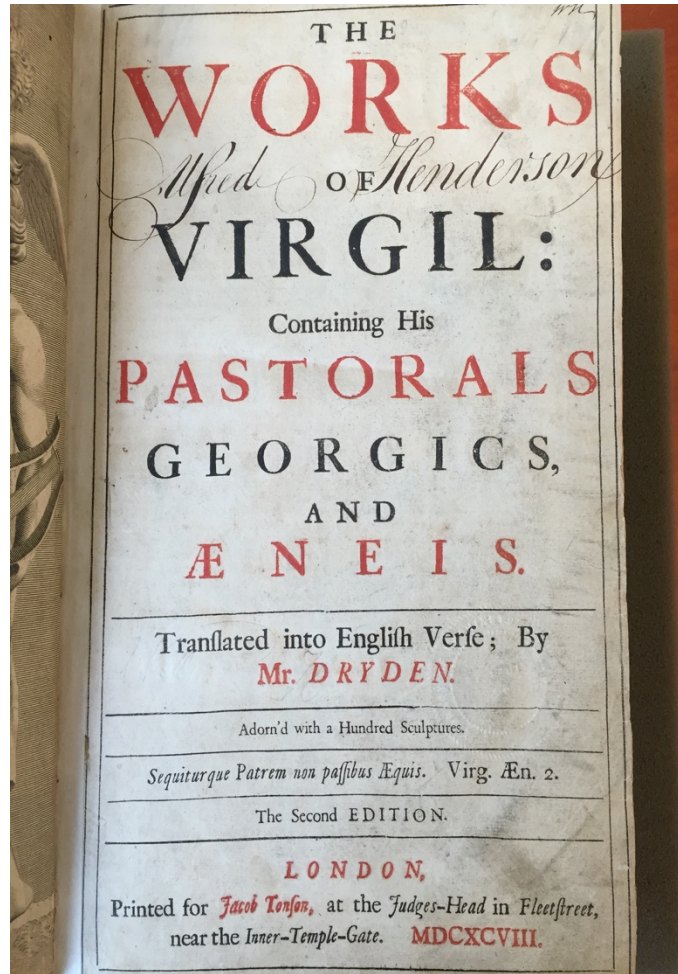


Figure 7. Title Page of Dryden's Virgil

Certainly the many collaborators and contributors I identify above would be enough to consider this text a collection, but the book is also famous as one of the first subscription volumes of poetry ever published. Tonson could not support the publication of the text on his own, and his solution to the problem of producing such an important, expensive text led him to more collecting—of money, of prestige, of assured readers. Two levels of subscribers would have their names published prominently in the book's front matter—members of the more prestigious group, paying five guineas a piece, would receive a large edition of the book with elaborate engravings illustrating Virgil's *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, or the *Aeneid*, each dedicated to one of them (see the image below for an example). The second subscribers would also have their names

printed in the volume, but would receive a smaller edition and were not assigned dedicated engravings (Barnard, “Dryden and Patronage” 212). The engravings, of course, required another set of collaborators, and added additional valences to the text, sometimes praising and other times even insulting their intended dedicatees. The engravings announce the book’s collaborative nature, and as they interrupt the text they constantly remind the reader of all of the people who worked on the text as well as all those who paid for it.



Figure 8. An example of an engraving from the Eclogues

The two groups of subscribers were, in John Barnard's words, "both patrons and consumers" (Barnard, "Dryden and Patronage" 212). They ensured that such an ambitious project would go to print, and they provided some guarantee that the book would find at least a small readership. It is no accident that this happened around the same time that Tonson was developing a formula for his *Poems on Affairs of State*—the principles of collection are being leveraged in the *Virgil* as well. But instead of directing the energies of collection toward authors and texts, Dryden and Tonson turned directly toward readers. The book works as a kind of anthology of distinguished readers, with the "who's who" table of contents at the front and the dedicated engravings spread throughout.

Marjorie Swann, in *Curiosities and Texts*, writes convincingly about single-author texts adapting the habits of textual collection, using Jonson and Herrick as her primary examples. I would also like to invite us to think about single-author texts as collections, not just in the sense of Barthes's "tissue of quotations," but in the practical application of the strategies of collection to single-author volumes. Dryden's *Virgil* is a perfect example of this phenomenon—though subscription may have initially been an economic necessity, Tonson and Dryden use the strategy of a collection to elevate the prestige of the volume, making it appeal to the subscribers themselves as well as to the other, less wealthy readers.

Dryden's *Virgil* has an advantage over other poetry collections because on its face the individual works were all written by the same person, but Tonson and Dryden both take advantage of collecting practices to draw in the many subscribers and contributors necessary to create the volume in its complete form. As such, it is an important example of the way collections became a central part of the distribution of poetry in the seventeenth century. By the publication of the *Virgil* at the end of the century, and indeed some time before that, the practices of collecting and

curating poetry were so ingrained in the process of printing and reading that they were used to compile one of the more significant single-author works of the period.

### 3.2 Re-forming Chronology

However, this is not to say that early modern poetry collections were on a linear trajectory leading from chaos to single-author volumes. Instead, as we have seen, the history of poetry collections is far more complex and less teleological. The traditional historical narrative of poetry collections—that they moved from variable miscellanies to literary anthologies—is complicated by the early history of poetry collections, which begins with a set of Elizabethan verse miscellanies that seem to be as ordered and “literary” as the volumes from the end of the early modern period. These early collections—beginning with Tottel’s famous *Songes and Sonettes* in 1557—aggregated the work of Sidney, Wyatt, Spenser, and others who have become familiar names in late-sixteenth-century poetry, a small canon of authors writing in a new English poetic tradition. However, what we might think of as a lofty literary goal was complicated by the popularity of the volumes and the impulse to collect and digest large amounts of poetic material—that is, by the desires and impulses of the readers of these volumes. Due to this effect—that is, the commercialization and distribution of collections of poetry—, many of these early collections were republished several times throughout the early seventeenth century, each time with more or different contents. By examining what happens to these verse miscellanies over the Jacobean period, we can understand some of the readerly and writerly impulses that combined in the process of printed collection. Of these volumes, Davison’s *Poetical Rapsody* digests many of the techniques and principles of the earlier miscellanies while projecting some of the qualities of the later printed commonplace books and instructional manuals. First published nearly 50 years after the first edition of Tottel’s miscellany, Davison’s volume enters the culture at a moment when Elizabethan miscellanies are more developed, but

throughout its subsequent three editions, *A Poetical Rapsody* morphs into a collection that more closely resembles mid-century miscellanies, serving as a bridge between the two seemingly opposing forms.

Unlike more frequently-studied Elizabethan verse miscellanies such as Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes* and *England's Helicon*, Davison's collection carries on a number of the Renaissance traditions of the genre while predicting the messy, variable future of the form. Published in 1602, it is the last Elizabethan verse collection, but its subsequent three editions (in 1608, 1611, and 1621) show its continued popularity through the Jacobean period. Like Tottel's miscellany, it was adapted and expanded in every subsequent edition; like *England's Helicon*, it "honours and extends a Sidneian poetic tradition;"<sup>57</sup> and like *The Phoenix Nest* it was assembled and promoted by a gentleman. It also borrows from the established tradition of printed songbooks. This combination of styles and preoccupations makes it the best example of the miscellaneous, indeed hodgepodge character of collections well into the midcentury period, when the genre would expand even more.

*A Poetical Rapsody*, therefore, is a collaborative volume in both its content and its form. Its content is made up of the works of disparate authors, collected and presented as a new, eclectic whole. Its form is cobbled together from the conventions of the different volumes that preceded it, even if these different generic conventions—erudite Sidneian poetics and miscellaneous songbook collection—seem to us incompatible with one another. This magpie-like willingness to collect and combine formal features and different contents is perhaps the main attribute of the genre: these books are always changing. *A Poetical Rapsody* is representative of this tendency and is a useful example of both the state of Elizabethan collections and their later 17th-century counterparts.

---

<sup>57</sup><http://versemiscellaniesonline.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/texts/poetical-rhapsody>.

Critics like to speak meticulously about the differences between miscellany and anthology, instructional and haphazard versus ordered and canonical. What *Poetical Rapsody* shows, even over just its first two editions, is that this line is not as clear as literary historians would have it. The first edition is more like the anthologies that supposedly gradually triumph as the 17th century wears on, but the second edition takes on so much more material and arranges it so differently that it starts to look more like a 1640 miscellany. And in 1621 the book, published again by Roger Jackson, but with a different printer, took on a more structured character. But this structure is very different from its original 1602 incarnation. The changes begin with the title, the book now being sold as “Davisons Poems, or, A Poeticall Rapsodie.” In the intervening decade, the volume had perhaps become more closely associated with the person of Francis Davison. This does not seem like a move to rebrand the book as a single-author volume—the term “rapsodie” is still displayed prominently and the book continues to advertise itself as a source of “variety and pleasure.” The title page still names the wide variety of genres to be found in the book, but it does so in a new way. We read that the volume is “Deuided into sixe Bookes,” and each of the six sections covers a pair of the same genres advertised in previous editions. Notably, “Pastoralls and Elegies” has moved all the way down to the third book. And the printer is not shy about the new organizing scheme. The title page promises, “Newly corrected and augmented, and put into a forme more pleasing to the Reader.” The new organization for the poems is apparently designed to appeal to readers, who, if we take the claim of the printer literally, are interested in finding poems of certain genres more easily. Whether the printer’s claim is based on real evidence of reader’s preference or more aspirational, we cannot know for sure, but here we see readers invoked as the reason for changes to the volume.

The problem with beginning the history of the literary anthology in the 1640s is that we miss these earlier developments, in which anthologies are not invented out of the confusion of

miscellanies. In fact the two genres are interrelated and can hardly be considered distinct. It is less useful to try to fit a text like this one into either of these pre-defined categories than it is to use its own label for itself: a rhapsody, i.e. a mixture of materials, some with classical antecedents, that are brought together to form a loose whole. Furthermore accounts of the history of poetry collections that begin at 1640, and are therefore focused on the mid-century decades as the beginning of miscellanies and anthologies, tend to view those years as including a lot of underdeveloped and messy volumes that were eventually refined into a format more easily marketable and more organized in the later part of the century.<sup>58</sup> In reality, the 1640s, 50s, and 60s were a high point of popularity in a longer history of poetry collections. Rather than evidence of the beginning of an anthology genre that would find ascendancy in the 18th century, these middle decades show text collection at a high-water mark. What's more, these mid-century volumes were variable not just in the texts they contained, but in their own production, forms, and organizational schemes. The middle of the 17th century does not provide good evidence for the beginning of a single genre, because collections at mid-century were not part of a single genre but were instead part of a spectrum of texts that served a wide variety of readers in different ways. Looking closely at some of these texts cannot tell us much about the development of eighteenth-century anthologies, but it can tell us a lot about reading and collecting habits in the seventeenth century, and the ways in which those habits are reflected in a highly various print record.

There are two main types of poetry collection that were popular in these decades: instructional miscellanies like *The Academy of Complements* and *Wits' Recreations*, and university verse anthologies like *Justa Edovardo King* and *Domiduca Oxoniensis*. Both kinds of collection are highly variable in their form and content. There was not much agreement on the way a poetry

---

<sup>58</sup>See Smyth.



collection should look, and each of them looks fairly different from the next. Beginning with *The Academy of Complements* and *Wits' Recreations* in 1640, Case's bibliography lists 15 unique miscellanies of the first type, most of them reprinted multiple times throughout the latter half of the century. I will give less time to descriptions of these volumes because they have been covered so thoroughly by Smyth, Swann, and others, but as I already explained in my discussion of *Wits Interpreter*, these volumes included prose as well as poetry, often misattributed or misquoted the works of various authors, were a bit disorganized, and were marketed towards casual readers for every day purposes.

Alongside these wild and unruly miscellanies there was another group of poetry volumes, one of which we have already discussed in detail, that approached collection in a very different manner. Printed university poetry anthologies may not have been as popular as instructional miscellanies at the bookseller's stalls, but many more of them were produced across a wider period of time. Case lists 40 of these anthologies from the 1630s through the 1660s, and that is not including collections such as *Lachrymae Musarum* which take their cue from university collections but are not made specifically by a university. These collections show how robust the presses of Oxford and Cambridge were for printed poetry production in the 17th century, and they reveal a competing set of strategies for the collection and distribution of poetry outside of either manuscript circulation or printed instructional miscellanies.

University collections are sometimes elegiac, but almost always in praise of a living or dead aristocratic figure, often a member of the royal family. When one university publishes a collection, say, on the marriage of Charles II, it is typical for the other university to soon follow suit. Though the immediate circumstances of each volume, as we saw with the London miscellanies, can be very different, these volumes usually contain predominantly Latin verse

(sometimes Greek, Hebrew, or even Old English as well), arranged at the front of the volume, and then a smaller amount of English verse at the end.<sup>59</sup> Some contributors will provide poems in both English and Latin, but many others will provide a single poem in one language or another.

These books have an air of authority that other poetry collections do not, or cannot, possess, and not just because of their heavy use of Latin. Frequently, the texts begin with poems written by a range of university officials. First (and/or last) comes the official university printer—Leonard Lichfield was the Oxford printer through the 1650s and 60s, for example. After the printer come the faculty, whose poems naturally appear in collections across a much wider range of time than that of their students. Emblazoned with the name of the university and its official printer and faculty, these books position themselves as important and erudite: the language is just a part of that construction.

But this is an appeal to the collective erudition of the contributors and the larger university community, not to the individual erudition of authors. If prestige is often associated with single-author folios, then these miscellanies represent a different model of the collective, institutional prestige conferred upon a book—and on a group of young writers—by a large university that can control the entirety of the publishing process from drafting to distribution. This is a very different (perhaps non-commercial) world of text creation than that of the London instructional miscellanies, but it requires us to think about authority and prestige as separate from single authorship.

In these two main classes of collection, London miscellany and university anthology, we can see that the development of poetry collection at midcentury is nonlinear and far from simple. These collections are diverse and specialized, but not entirely wild and uncontrolled. The later

---

<sup>59</sup>Sometimes the English section of the book would begin with an English rendering of the Latin title.

popularity of literary-minded anthologies does not refine an unrefined mode of collection, but chooses one option from a wide array of poetry-collecting practices available in a time when collection of disparate texts into a single volume was fashionable for university fellows and London printers alike.

Finally, we are conditioned to look for big changes at the end of centuries: the end of one thing, the beginning of another. This is even more true in the 1690s, since the Restoration is often treated as a warm-up to the Enlightenment, and this tendency manifests itself in the scholarship on late-17th century miscellanies. Poetry collections were very popular at the end of the century, and republication of multiple volumes suggests that miscellanies were a profitable enterprise. Particularly, the supposed invention of the yearly anthology, that collects a body of work toward an eventual literary canon, is heralded as the breakthrough of the moment, leading eventually to a uniform group of texts considered “great literature.” I do not challenge that there was commercial advantage to producing poetry collections, but I want to refocus the account of these serial volumes away from casting them as a long-18th century innovation. Instead, these volumes are in a tradition of iterative collections that goes back to Davison and the other Elizabethan collectors. Viewed through the history of collecting, the developments of the 1690s seem less like a brave new world for literary culture and more like the natural extension of a set of existing conventions.

Fascinatingly, the bulk of the innovation in this new type of miscellany seems largely to be the work of one stationer: Jacob Tonson, working in collaboration with one of his major authors, John Dryden, both of whom I have already discussed in some detail. Rather than creating a new literary culture out of whole cloth, the Tonson volumes understood and incorporated the best elements of previous volumes. As such, the 1690s can be viewed not just as the beginning of an

18th-century anthology tradition but as the continuation and culmination of a 17th-century culture of poetry collections in print.

Let us first consider the miscellanies of the 1680s, the raw material with which Tonson and others were working. These volumes often refer to their currency directly in their titles. There is 1680's *A New Collection Of the Choicest Songs*, 1685's *Loyal Poems and Satyrs Upon the Times*, and 1689's *A Collection of Poems on Affairs of State*. While not referring to a specific historical event, these texts are concerned with now-ness even as they contain and reconfigure poems of the past. Unlike Tottel's miscellany or *England's Helicon*, these volumes use the current moment rather than nostalgia as a major selling point. However, that does not mean that these volumes point only forward.

This mode of advertising and selling poetry collections will come to dominate the 1690s market for miscellanies, but here in the 1680s we find it alongside the other modes that were previously popular. I cannot stress enough that though this new form comes to dominate, the other forms *continue to exist*. Whether this is a marketing strategy, a new way of thinking about poetry, or both, the emphasis on current material is the primary innovation of these new volumes, which in many other ways follow the model set forth by *Poetical Rapsody* and its Elizabethan forebears.<sup>60</sup>

Consider the markers of collection that appear in that third volume itself. The prestigious Latin title, *Examen Poeticum*, followed by a direct appeal to the concept of "miscellany" combine the titling conventions of both kinds of mid-century collection. The book also includes a detailed table of contents which, though not split into sections as in *Poetical Rapsody*, enumerates the different kinds of texts and makes them accessible to the reader. At over 600 pages, the book gets authority from its length, but as well from its dedication and the many prominent writers

---

<sup>60</sup>That is to say, the volumes contain mostly poetry without prose, are arranged around the work of certain famous writers (living or dead), and often seem somewhat hastily constructed and/or disorganized.

displayed on its pages. As we saw with later editions of Davison's volume, *Examen Poeticum* accrues more material as subsequent editions are produced. Tonson does come through, at least for a few years, on his promise of creating a yearly miscellany, and he balanced new volumes with re-issues of the popular older editions. In this way, Tonson embraced both new and old publishing models: fulfilling his promise to include new poets while appealing to readers by repeating the older texts.

While Tonson is certainly invested in marking his texts as different, it seems more likely that he sought to differentiate himself from his publishing competitors than he did from the previous decades of poetry collection. In fact, Tonson's volumes often position themselves as the natural inheritors of a sometimes haphazard culture of collection that delights in variety, antiquity, newness, and specificity all at once. Tonson's volumes are every bit as variable and contradictory as the rest of the poetry collecting tradition. This is not to devalue these texts, but instead to show that alongside the development of the single-author folio and the rise of the professional author, there was a flourishing tradition in print of poetry co-existing wildly in texts bounded by a loose but powerful set of conventions.

It is easy to see why many have studied Tonson's *Poems on Affairs of State* and his yearly miscellanies as the origin points of English anthologized canon-building, but we would do well to remember that other volumes of the late 1690s are not nearly so invested in these figures who will later become canonical: indeed, many of them still follow the older patterns of collection. And though the list of authors suggests a formal mode of anthologizing, these texts are not often perfectly organized or collected.

Printed poetry collections deserve sustained scholarly attention because they reveal to us habits of mind, of print, and especially of reading that extend far beyond the pages of the scattered

volumes. Rather than being a byproduct of singular authorship or manuscript circulation, the printed collection reveals patterns in the way poetry was made and consumed across the period. These volumes remained various and miscellaneous in form and content throughout the century, but their very variety was part of their appeal. If we are to take collaborative authorship seriously, then we must be prepared to understand a culture that itself saw no problem in connecting disparate poems and other writings together within the pages of a single book. Not simply a stopping-off point on the way to a more “organized” literary culture, these books show us the collective effort—in writing and in reading—that underlies the poetry we have since separated from its collaborative print context.

## Works Cited

- Ayloffe, John. "Britannia and Raleigh." 1689. Web. 15 Aug. 2016.
- Barnard, John. "Dryden and Patronage." *The Cambridge Companion to John Dryden*. Ed. Steven N Zwicker. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 199–220. Print.
- . "Dryden, Tonson, and the Patrons of The Works of Virgil (1697)." *John Dryden: Tercentenary Essays*. Ed. Paul Hammond and David Hopkins. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.
- Bellamy, Elizabeth J. *Dire Straits : The Perils of Writing the Early Modern English Coastline From Leland to Milton*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2013. Print.
- Benedict, Barbara M. *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996. Print.
- Case, Arthur Ellicott. *A Bibliography of English Poetical Miscellanies, 1521-1750*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1935. Print. Bibliographical Society, London.
- Cotgrave, John. *Wits Interpreter, The English Parnassus*. London: N. Brooke, 1655. Print. Early English Books Online.
- Davison, Francis. *A Poetical Rapsody*. London: John Baily, 1602. Print. Early English Books Online.
- Hale, John K. *Milton's Languages: The Impact of Multilingualism on Style*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Print.
- Hughes, Merritt Y. et al., eds. *A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970. Print.
- Love, Harold. *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998. Print.
- Marotti, Arthur F. *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995. Print.
- Marvell, Andrew. *A Collection of Poems on Affairs of State; Viz. . / by A- M-L, Esq.; and Other Eminent Wits. ; Most Whereof Never Before Printed*. Ed. John Dryden and Thomas Sprat. London, : [s.n.], Printed in the year, MDCLXXXIX [1689], 1689. Print. Early English Books, 1641-1700 / 2618:01.
- Milton, John. *Justa Edouardo King Naufrago, Ab Amicis Moerentibus, Amoris & Mneias Charin*. Cantabrigiae : Apud Thomam Buck, & Rogerum Daniel, celeberrimae Academiae typographos, 1638., 1638. Print. Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 761:03.

- Moseley, C. W. R. D. *The Poetic Birth: Milton's Poems of 1645*. Aldershot, Hants, England : Brookfield, Vt., USA: Scolar Press ; Gower, 1991. Print.
- Plutarch. *The Philosophie, Commonlie Called, the Morals Vvritten by the Learned Philosopher Plutarch of Chaeronea. Translated Out of Greeke into English, and Conferred with the Latine Translations and the French, by Philemon Holland of Coventrie, Doctor in Physicke. VVhereunto Are Annexed the Summaries Necessary to Be Read Before Every Treatise*. Trans. Philemon Holland. At London : Printed by Arnold Hatfield, 1603., 1603. Print. Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 390:04.
- Poems on Affairs of State from the Time of Oliver Cromwell to the Abdication of K. James the Second*. London, 1697. Print. Early English Books Online.
- Revard, Stella Purce. *Milton and the Tangles of Neaera's Hair: The Making of the 1645 Poems*. Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 1997. Print.
- Smyth, Adam. *"Profit and Delight": Printed Miscellanies in England, 1640-1682*. Detroit, Mich: Wayne State University Press, 2004. Print.
- Swann, Marjorie. *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. Print. Material Texts.
- Tate, Nahum, ed. *Examen Poeticum Being the Third Part of Miscellany Poems*. London: Jacob Tonson, 1693. Print. Early English Books Online.
- Turner, Alberta T. "Milton and the Convention of the Academic Miscellanies." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 5 (1975): 86–93. Web. 24 May 2016.
- Zwicker, Steven N. "The Day That George Thomason Collected His Copy of the Poems of Mr. John Milton, Both English and Latin, Compos'd at Several Times." *The Review of English Studies* 64.264 (2013): 231–245. Web. 27 May 2016.



# **The Productive Energies of Rivalry: Literary Personality in Collaborative Networks**

In the previous two chapters, I examined a multimedia work and printed poetry collections, two classes of object that, while not produced by a conscious partnership of authors, can be understood as collaborative. When examining only the products of collaborative work, the critic risks missing those types of relationships that are clearly collaborative without producing a single work. If we ignore these relationships, literary personality recedes into the background, and all literary output starts to look like authorless collaboration. The advantage of a network approach is that individuals retain their wholeness even as they connect to and interact with the aggregate. In the next two chapters I will explore the place of literary personality within networks of collaboration. Authors are not dead, though they no longer hold the central position in literary production. If collaboration is a given in the early modern period, what is the place of literary personality, and how do we understand the effects that personal relationships have on literary forms?

Rivalry makes a good case study for the investigation of the role of authors in collaborative networks, and authorial competition is best understood as a mode of collaboration. It is not simply, as Bloom would have it, a driver for literary influence in “strong poets” (Bloom 1). Rivalry is an outcropping of a larger collaborative relation—the sharing, imitation, and refashioning of written material. Therefore the moments in a text where we can locate parody or attack of a rival is not just the trace of personal antipathy or competition, it is the result of a collaborative effort driven by economic or literary competition, negative feeling, anxiety, or some combination of all three.

By looking at patterns in two well-studied sets of rivals—those of William Shakespeare and John Dryden—I will show how collaborative exchanges taking place among rivals enrich literary work. Perhaps the first critical account of early modern literary rivalry is by Dryden himself, in the *Essay of Dramatick Poesie*. Neander, Dryden’s mouthpiece in the dialogue, gives a “Character of the author” before describing each figure’s literary work (Dryden and Howard 1569–70). This mode of analysis—the description of an individual’s character followed by the conflict that their work represents—<sup>61</sup> misunderstands literary rivalry as a clash of personalities that adjudicates high-minded critical disputes: it pits one singular genius against another.<sup>62</sup> The reality is much more complicated: (i) rivalry is not the inverse of collaboration, and though its energies are different, it too is productive rather than destructive; (ii) rivalries often occur among current or former collaborators, blurring the lines between the two phenomena; (iii) rivalry is almost always driven by economic, social, and professional factors in addition to ego and personality; and (iv) rivalry is not simply a bidirectional relation—one major figure against another—but a multidirectional process within a knot of conflicting relationships, many against many against many rather than one against another.

The best site for a study of rivalry is the collaborative, contested world of early modern drama.

First I will address the rivalries of Shakespeare to show that the multifarious world of

---

<sup>61</sup>For Dryden the contest between Shakespeare and Dryden mirrors debates on the conflict between French and English, ancient and modern, and unity and disunity.

<sup>62</sup>Much otherwise excellent literary criticism on the subject of rivalry follows Dryden’s lead. Even James Shapiro, whose readings of rivalry in Renaissance drama are careful and measured, organizes his relations in only three pairs, Marlowe and Jonson, Shakespeare and Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare (Shapiro). And in Russ McDonald’s 1988 study *Shakespeare and Jonson / Jonson and Shakespeare*, the title says enough about reducing the conflict of the period to two personalities (McDonald). Recent studies have fared better. In *Shakespeare and the Poets’ War*, James Bednarz brings Shakespeare more fully into the biggest theatrical debates of the day, but in doing so puts perhaps too much emphasis on his conflict with Jonson alone (Bednarz). Bart Van Es’s 2013 study *Shakespeare in Company* does the best job of balancing literary personality against the many forces in the world of Renaissance play-making, bringing theatrical companies into conversation with authorial debates (Van Es). However the study is more wide-ranging and does not zero in on rivalry as a productive form of relation. The question of how to balance concerns about literary personality against a collaborative environment that often required such personalities be downplayed remains open, and is one that networks—which both isolate individual nodes and show the patterns of their interaction—is well-positioned to deal with.

Elizabethan drama affected even that playwright whose individuality is most treasured. Then I will turn my attention to Dryden, whose ego-driven antipathies caused many friendships and alliances to go sour, illustrating the shifting ground on which rivalry operates. Finally I will explore the rivalrous components of influence in a brief account of Dryden's Shakespearean adaptations—what happens when the rival can no longer answer back? I will show that Dryden and Shakespeare write and are written by their rivalries—the process of collaborating through contest is mutually constitutive.

## 4.1 Shakespeare

As the acceptance of Shakespeare's world as one of pervasive collaboration has grown,<sup>63</sup> the view of Shakespeare's rivalries must be adjusted to respect the multifarious, uncertain authorial and theatrical landscape in which his work was produced. A close examination of Shakespeare's rivalries, therefore, will include not only an account of how he collaborated with individual rivals like Marlowe and Jonson, but how the creative energies of rivalry extend to the cooperative world of London playwrighting in the period and to the participatory communities of dramatic production, theater companies.

Shakespeare's rivalry with Oxford-education Christopher Marlowe is an extension of a longstanding criticism of Shakespeare as undereducated and lower class.<sup>64</sup> In this reductive view, Shakespeare represents natural talent while Marlowe stands for educated refinement, with the two opposites pitted against one another. In reality, as evident in the multiple authorial exchanges between them, the two writers started out much closer and drew inspiration from one another even as they sought to differentiate their respective styles.

---

<sup>63</sup>Recently, the work of a generation of scholars of collaboration has culminated in the inclusion of more collaborators, including Marlowe, credited in the *New Oxford Shakespeare*.

<sup>64</sup>A traditional review of Shakespeare's rivals often begins with positioning him against the University Wits, who regarded him as an "upstart Crow," in the words of Robert Greene.

Putting aside for a moment the new evidence of direct coauthorship between Marlowe and Shakespeare, the opposition of the two authors typically centers around *The Merchant of Venice*, which borrows from Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and other Marlovian works. I will avoid retracing every exchange within the play—Shapiro and others have already done a thorough job—but I want to highlight a few instances that show the borrowing to be an act of exchange rather than simply competition or parody. (See Shapiro 109.) In Act 4, Shakespeare refers to the “stock of Barrabas,” perhaps slyly indicated a lineage that traces to the main character of *The Jew of Malta* (4.3.292). And even earlier in the play, he borrows from a different work, part two of *Tamburlaine* (2.1.24-31). Finally, he also seems to repeat a line from Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Elegy XIII*: “The Moon sleeps with Endymion every day” becomes “Peace, ho! The moon sleeps with Endymion” (5.1.109). These encounters indicate an engagement with Marlowe that is careful rather than dashed off. Shakespeare takes Marlowe's influence and competition seriously, and he considers his rival's full body of work rather than simply making parodic references to a single play or poem.

Perhaps the most famous piece of borrowed dialogue is also the most telling. Shakespeare has Salanio mock Shylock by repeating his cries of “My daughter! My ducats!” (2.8.15-17), which echoes the “O girl, o gold” passage of *Jew of Malta* (2.1.57). Rather than having Shylock directly repeat the words and sentiments of Barabas, Shakespeare works at a degree of remove—he acknowledges the ventriloquism is taking place. Barabas' words are direct and overt, a reflection of the antisemitic attitudes of the time. Shylock's words are heard only through the mockery of another. We cannot be sure if this is an accurate quotation of Shylock or the reductive interpretation of his tormentors. Shakespeare takes up Marlowe's words but openly acknowledges, through this performance of quotation, what it means to adjust, interpret, repeat, and even parody the work of another author. The rivalrous exchange between Shakespeare and

Marlowe is delicate—rather than trying to bluntly outdo Marlowe or mock him, Shakespeare subtly incorporates Marlovian material into the fabric of his play.

The complexity of the borrowing between Marlowe and Shakespeare is a reflection of the larger theatrical culture, in which authorship was not clearly defined and hardly ever organized around individual authors. Shakespeare's rivalrous relationships are part of larger patterns of exchange that include multiple authorship, borrowing of plots and tropes, and the group-work of theatre companies. The advantage of a network perspective is to see rivalry as a part of this exchange rather than an extrinsic competitive impulse that interrupts the normal cooperative environment. Rivalry is business as usual: built into the competitive, cooperative landscape of Renaissance drama. This knot of relations friendly, rivalrous, and both is nowhere more evident than in the so-called "Poets' War" that took place at the end of Shakespeare's career.

The earliest interpretations of this loose conflict, felt through textual exchanges across a number of plays, was first characterized as a clash between two theater companies—the King's Men (formerly the Lord Chamberlain's Men) and the Admiral's Men. Scholars today describe the conflict as taking place among groups of authors, especially between Marston, Fletcher, and Middleton on the one side, and Jonson on the other. Allusions to Shakespeare appear in some of the attacks, and there are a few places in the Shakespeare corpus where he may have been responding. But despite all the criticism that has been written about this conflict, there is little textual evidence to trace the opposition between Shakespeare and Jonson or any of the other figures (Shapiro 142–3).

The lack of intertext is unsurprising if we take rivalry and competition to be a part of the ongoing exchange between authors and theatre companies rather than an interruption of a normal, more "peaceful" way of doing things. Competition is integral to theatrical production in the period,

and the lack of overwhelming textual evidence of the Poets' War indicates that it was not an aberrant moment in the theater, but rather a slight lean toward rivalry in an already competitive and collaborative atmosphere. The few clear moments of rivals sniping at each other in the playtexts themselves support this account of playmaking.

The closest thing to a thesis statement for this conflict comes, unsurprisingly, from Jonson as part of the "Induction" to *Every Man Out of His Humour*. Upon noticing the audience, the choleric Asper delivers a short Jonsonian diatribe describing his position relative to the audience and to critics. He promises "musick worth your eares" in contrast to the "monstrousness of time, / Where every servile imitating spirit, ... / In a mere halting furie, striues to fling / His vic'rous bodie in the Thespian spring, / And streight leap's forth a Poet; but as lame / As Vulcane, or the founder of Criplegate" (Jonson, B2r). Jonson juxtaposes himself with the imitators who become poets in name because they produce plays, but whose works are, quite literally for Jonson, deformed. Other poets trade barbs with Jonson over this issue, but for the most part Shakespeare himself has very little to say on the matter. Even in the so-called "purge of Jonson" in *Troilus and Cressida*, in which the rough, pigheaded Ajax stands in for the rival playwright, Shakespeare leaves much unsaid. So much is unsaid, in fact, that we cannot be sure that an attack on Jonson is the purpose of the passage.

Shakespeare's direct participation in the conflict may be difficult to prove, but other authors fill in the gaps. Marston and Jonson trade many insults and fire back and forth at one another in their plays, but on the rare occasions where they are co-authors—in the play *Eastward Ho!* co-written with George Chapman as well—their mutual target is Shakespeare. The play fits the model of theatrical collaboration and competition. It is intended as a direct response to another collaborative work, *Westward Ho!*, by Webster and Dekker, but the text seems to single out

Shakespeare for special parody. One of the principle characters, an irresponsible daughter, is named Gertrude, and a footman named Hamlet makes a brief appearance in the play. When Hamlet begins to act oddly, a character exclaims, “S’foot, Hamlet, are you mad?” (Fossen 3.2.7). One imagines this line getting a big laugh from anyone who had recently seen *Hamlet*, but these parodic moments hardly constitute attack on par with the vitriolic sentiments expressed by Jonson in *Every Man Out*. Instead, the competition with Shakespeare seems mild compared to exchanges with other playwrights.

Despite the lack of strong, direct attacks, Bednarz locates a different arena in which Shakespeare takes up competition against Jonson’s side of the Poets’ War: generic innovation. In particular, he singles out *Twelfth Night* and the genre of romantic comedy as a response to Jonsonian comical satire (Bednarz 179). In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare combines techniques from Jonson’s *Cynthia’s Revels* and Marston’s *What You Will* (which he uses as the subtitle of his play). He adjudicates the competition between Marston and Jonson, and their joint competition against him, by creating a synthesis of their forms with his own. Simply put, Shakespeare learns from his detractors and puts their criticisms to use, as any playwright who had been steeped in this cooperative theatrical world would also do. Characterizing the conflict of the Poet’s War as a clash of titans between Jonson and Shakespeare alone misses that the competition moves in multiple directions and across multiple registers at once, allowing Shakespeare and his fellow playwrights to adjust and borrow accordingly.

If playtexts were stable documents this might be the end of the story—loose confederations of playwrights collaborating and competing across shifting lines of theatrical companies. But of course the author of a play constitutes only one small part of its production within the larger context of the theatrical company. As author, theater owner, actor, and company member,

Shakespeare was adept at managing the different forces of theatrical production, even as this additional set of competitive relations deeply affected his writing.

The competition between William Kempe and Robert Armin, the two successive principal clowns in the King's Men, is nearly as famous as any contemporary authorial rivalry. Kemp's boisterous, improvisatory style stands in stark opposition to Armin's wry, controlled delivery, and Kemp's departure from the King's Men and replacement by Armin was no doubt a fraught transition. Two small books published in the same year by Kemp and Armin respectively outline their respective comedic stances and publicize their debate. In *Nine Daies' Wonder*, an account of Kempe's celebrated dance from London to Norwich, Kempe memorializes his public stunt and solidifies his notoriety—fostered in roles like Falstaff—as a master of grand gestures. In contrast, Armin's *Quips Upon Questions* sets up its author as the master of the well-crafted joke, told in a controlled setting. Armin presents himself as a craftsman whose skills can be taught and passed on; Kempe displays his prowess as an inimitable showman.

The difference can be felt in Shakespeare's writing. The clowns of the early plays—Falstaff, Lancelot Gobbo, Bottom—are given long speeches and room for improvisation and physical comedy. In the later plays characters like Feste and Touchstone are witty, inquisitive, and find humor in quick, scripted exchanges. A critic with a strong authorial sensibility might say that Shakespeare understood his players and adjusted his scripts accordingly; a critic with a network sensibility would instead argue that as the company changed to suit new members, so the collaborative process of playmaking produced material to suit the new players. In other words, we cannot know how much of the clown's parts are purely Shakespeare and how much are crafted in conversation with these two strong personalities.



Critics often put Shakespeare at the center of this conflict—they argue that the transition from Kempe to Armin resolved an ongoing frustration Shakespeare had with Kempe’s improvisatory style and allowed him, the author, to have more control over the scripts. The Kempe-Armin rivalry is therefore seen as an episode of Shakespeare’s career development, in which he comes out on top by taking more control of the company and his writing. Instead I argue that Shakespeare is a mediator in the conflict between the two comic professionals. As the main playwright of the company, he would have felt the consequence of the switch between them in his writing and in his daily dealings with the company, but there is no evidence that he would have thought about the conflict solely in terms of his authorial development.

However, in the same year their two books were published and just after Armin has joined the King’s Men, *Hamlet* was likely performed, and included a passage which appears to comment on the Kempe-Armin transition. Hamlet’s speech to the Player at Act 3 Scene 2 is often seen as Shakespeare’s principal attack on Kempe and other improvisors in favor of Armin’s dutiful style. In the speech Hamlet proves himself to be a fussy director, asking that the Player “speak the speech... as I pronounced it to you” and insists that “those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them” (3.2.1-2, 40-2). To any reader or theatergoer with a knowledge of the company, these lines clearly refer to the “robustious” style of Kempe. But the same reader should avoid equating Hamlet’s attitudes with those of the author. Hamlet sounds humorless, and *The Mousetrap* is a play with a function beyond entertainment—the lines must be read correctly or else Claudius will not be successfully entrapped. Read in this context, how seriously are we to take Hamlet’s criticisms?

The lines certainly seem to take Armin’s side in the debate, but that is to be expected as he is currently a member of the company. While Shakespeare’s intention may show through in the

passage, it is equally plausible that the lines stake out a stark but peaceful transition between the two clowns. The lines are so vivid as to recall Kempe's presence in the minds of the audience: "O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods Herod. Pray you, avoid it" (3.2.9-15). Kempe was a beloved performer and an attraction in his own right. These lines insult both Kempe and his audience, presumably present at this performance. Could it be we are meant to take the lines as gentle ribbing? The myopic Hamlet is unable to understand the appeal of a performer like Kempe, and the audience might take these lines in fond remembrance, calling to mind those times when the "robustious, periwig-pated fellow" made them laugh. Indeed the speech could function as a send-off as well as a gentle rebuke, with the understanding that Hamlet is a bit absurd for taking such a hard-line position.

At the same time, the speech acknowledges the arrival of Armin and functions as a preview of the kind of performances he will deliver as clown: regular, subtle, very unlike Kempe's but still pleasurable for the audience and worthy of their admiration. It calls to mind a familiar mode of clowning in order to introduce a new one: Armin will deliver speeches "trippingly on the tongue" but he will "be not too tame" though he will be careful not to "o'erstep... the modesty of nature" (3.2.4, 20-1). The speech then, coming at a moment of transition for the company, eases that transition by sending off the old clown on a funny (but slightly contentious) while lauding the new style that is to come.

Shakespeare is not expressing a personal opinion on acting in this speech, or at least we cannot prove that this is the function of the speech. Instead, he is mediating a conflict between two

clowning styles, championed by two opposing figures in the King's Men. He skillfully eases this transition by allowing the audience to feel the difference between the two. The playtext is a place where competing claims are negotiated, not where a single author sounds off on a preference for performers. Shakespeare is not the focal point of this rivalry, but he plays a key role as fellow actor, company member, and playwright by providing a theatrical outlet for this debate and highlighting the difference for the audience.

Shakespeare's attitude towards a rivalry of which he is not a main party is subtle and sophisticated; he sees it not as a pitched battle but as a complex negotiation, part of the collaborative sphere of the playhouse. This position is laid out elsewhere in the corpus as well. Though Shakespeare's plays are full of romantic and political rivals, they seldom address poetic rivalry directly, but the sonnets devote at least eight poems to the subject of joint poetic and romantic competition.

Shakespeare's posture toward the so-called Rival Poet is not combative. Always addressing his beloved and never the rival, Shakespeare situates himself as the lesser poet in a battle for the lover's affections. He frames his struggle as the need to be noticed despite his poetic deficiencies. A side-effect of the modesty topos throughout the poems, Shakespeare uses this technique to defer to his rival and his beloved at once. The attitude is often of coexistence for all three of them. The final couplet in Sonnet 83 reads, "There lives more life in one of your fair eyes / Than both your poets can in praise devise" (lines 13-4). The beauty and power of the lover is capacious enough that both poets, even working together, could never fully describe the beauty of a single eye. Likewise, in Sonnet 80 the speaker refers to the beloved's "worth, wide as the ocean is" (5) which can easily lift both the speaker's "saucy bark" (7) in its shallows and the rival's more worthy boat in its "soundless deep" (10). The speaker's never hopes to erase the

rival entirely or even to cause his beloved to spurn the other poet. Instead, coexistence is a given—the rival’s presence is almost inevitable and the job of the poet is simply to be heard despite the competition.

In the final poem of this small section in the sequence, Shakespeare addresses the effects that the rival poet might have on the speaker’s writing process. Sonnet 86 returns to the same seafaring metaphor as Sonnet 80, even using a similar phrase: “proudest sail” and “proud full sail” (80.6, 86.1). But in this poem the speaker wonders if the knowledge that “a better spirit doth use your name, / And in the praise thereof spends all his might” (2-3) impedes his own ability to write. The speaker gives grudging praise to the rival’s superior ability as he wonders if that obstructs his own, but in the end admits that “when your countenance filled up his line, / Then I lacked matter; that enfeebled mine” (Greenblatt et al. 13–4). The presence of the rival alone does not constitute a threat or impediment to the poet’s ability, but the beloved has shown preference for the rival which has “enfeebled” the speaker. Competition itself seems unavoidable, but losing the competition entirely is paralyzing for the poet. However, this threat is external to the competition itself: the preference shown for one author over another appears to be at the whim of the beloved and not due to the greater quality of the rival poet’s work (otherwise, that quality would be more threatening to the speaker than he contends). The pattern of these sonnets stake out a place for competition in the life cycle of the poet, and while the beloved’s attention poses a threat to the poet’s abilities, the competitor himself never does.

Without equating Shakespeare with the speaker of the sonnets, these observations stake out the complexity with which Shakespeare must have approached rivalry in both drama and poetry. Finding balance between the usefulness of competition—which comes naturally in a world so steeped in co-authorship and group work—and the threat of being eclipsed by one’s rival, seems

paramount. In the early part of the century, Shakespeare negotiates the blurring of competition and collaboration as any other author working in the same milieu: by acknowledging that the two are intrinsically linked practices. Early modern dramatists, especially Shakespeare, understood that you cannot work with other authors without necessarily competing with them and you cannot survive competition without learning from your opponents.

## 4.2 Dryden

In the latter part of the century, without the benefit of the overridingly collaborative atmosphere of the Elizabethan theater companies, another now-famous dramatist and poet, John Dryden, also contended with his rivals. In some ways he approached his competitors in the same collaborative mode as Shakespeare, borrowing and adapting as much as parodying and criticizing. In other ways his rivalries, in the parodic spirit of the Restoration, were ruled more by personality and reputation. The collaborative spirit at work behind competition can be harder to see in this cutthroat world, but Dryden is every bit as reliant on his rivals for inspiration as Shakespeare.

Like Shakespeare's, almost all of Dryden's rivals begin as collaborators. In the case of Sir Robert Howard, he and Dryden began as relatives by marriage. Howard was a nobleman and brother to Elizabeth, who was married to Dryden. As Dryden's brother-in-law and social better, Howard often served as Dryden's patron and was an intrinsic part of Dryden's ongoing project to raise his own social station. Around the time of the Restoration, their relationship was good, even friendly, with regard to the appropriateness of their respective rank.

In 1660, Howard published a short volume of his poems which included a single commendatory poem by Dryden. The poem, "To my Honored Friend, Sir Robert Howard," praises Howard in effusive but not apolitical terms: "So in your Verse, a native sweetnesse dwells, / Which shames Composure, and its Art excells" (R. Howard Sir 5–6). Dryden describes Howard as a natural,

homegrown talent, and ties his native English abilities to recent political events: “Like some brave Captain, your successful Pen / Restores the Exil’d to her Crown again;” (R. Howard Sir 49–50). For Dryden, his relation to Howard is never without consideration of political and critical concerns. Howard is a good poet, in Dryden’s mind, because his politics and poetics are in line with Dryden’s own—in the poem, as in life, Howard is a confirmed Royalist. His poetry is described as substantive and unadorned, and Dryden lays out a critical position through praise of his brother-in-law. For Dryden, Howard represents the unadorned, quintessentially English poet for whom “... to write worthy things of worthy men, / Is the peculiar talent of your Pen” (R. Howard Sir 99–100). In the eyes of Dryden, so long as Howard’s political and critical skills are aligned, he can do no wrong.

It is therefore unsurprising that Dryden seems to have made himself available to help Howard as much as possible. In his letter “To the Reader,” directly preceding Dryden’s commendatory poem, Howard writes, “I confesse my Interest prevail’d with me though, not wholly to neglect to the Reader, since I prevail’d with a worthy Friend to take so much view of my blotted Copies, as to free me from grosse Errors” (R. Howard Sir, A5r). Given that Dryden is the only one to include a commendatory poem in the volume, it seems likely that he is the “worthy Friend” who helped Howard to correct the poems. Just two years later, the two collaborated on a play, *The Indian Queen*, published under Howard’s name but bearing Dryden’s signature dramatic form—the heroic couplet. This form would prove to be the undoing of their friendly collaboration and the beginning of a more acrimonious period, lasting nearly up to Howard’s death.

From his first printed encounter with Howard, in the commendatory poem discussed above, Dryden connected his brother-in-law with his own poetic aims and critical principals. But Howard threatened those very principals in his preface to *Four New Plays*, the 1665 volume in

which *The Indian Queen* appears. At the start of the preface, Howard's opinions seem in line with Dryden's as he praises England's playwrights: "I do really prefer our Plays as much before any other Nations, as I do the best of ours before my own" (R. Howard, a2v). But later he comes out against rhyme in plays, arguing that rhyme is more suitable for poetry and the more "natural" sounding blank verse is best for play's speeches, which purport to be "the present Effect of Accidents not thought of" (R. Howard, a4r). This statement against rhyme is especially odd in a volume that includes the rhyming couplets of *The Indian Queen*, but Dryden seems to have taken the criticism of Howard seriously, even personally.

In the *Essay of Dramatick Poesie*, written about two years after *The Indian Queen*, Dryden dramatizes his own critical position as a dialogue between four characters who represent real individuals: Eugenius, a defender of modern playwrights stands for Lord Buckhurst, the text's dedicatee; Lisideius, a proponent of French plays for Charles Sedley; Neander for Dryden; and the combative Crites for Howard. Crites finds himself on the wrong side of two of the text's three debates. In the dialogue's first section, Crites defends classical drama against Eugenius' support of the moderns—seemingly in contradiction of Howard's real position in *Four New Plays*—, and in the final section he debates with Neander in favor of blank verse over heroic couplets. Crites is presented as skeptical and cantankerous, and he changes his position throughout the dialogue. First, he is against modern English drama, but in his defense of blank verse at the end of the dialogue he winds up defending the English dramatic position. More than the other characters, Crites is presented as intellectually inconsistent in addition to being unpleasant. Naturally, as Dryden no doubt intended, this combination of personal and critical attack escalated the public debate with Howard.

Howard responded in the preface to his play *The Great Favourite*, published in 1668. Howard is civil in his refutation of the *Essay*, repeatedly referring to its author as “ingenious,” though perhaps it is his rank rather than his personality that allows him to take the high road. He even expresses a desire to keep the conflict on rhyme just between the two of them: “Yet, I hope, he is so ingenious, that he would not wish this Argument should extend further then to him and me” (Dryden and Howard). However, Howard’s response is not without veiled disparagement of its topic. In apparent reference to their difference in rank, Howard ends his preface by discussing the light of reason: “... When it shines in full height, and directly ascendant over any Subject, it leaves but little shaddow; But when descended and grown low, its oblique shining renders the shadow larger then the substance, and gives the deceiv’d person a wrong measure of his own proportion” (Dryden and Howard). This attack on Dryden’s lower social status and misplaced sense of “his own proportion” seems designed to wound Dryden precisely where he is most vulnerable and most likely to take offense. Howard plays at civility but ultimately hits Dryden where it hurts. This attack feels akin to Greene’s famous attack on Shakespeare for lack of education and social status, and even more than Shakespeare, Dryden is unable to let such a criticism stand.

Howard’s response spurs Dryden’s publication of the *Defence of An Essay*, in which he pointedly refutes Howard’s claims. From the beginning Dryden indicates how deeply the comments on his class seem to have affected him, though he couches it in deferential language:

I must confess he might have better consulted his Reputation, than by matching himself with so weak an Adversary. But if his Honour be diminished in the choice of his Antagonist, it is sufficiently recompens’d in the election of his Cause: which being the weaker, in all appearance, as combating the received Opinions of the best Ancient and Modern Authors, will add to this glory, if he overcome. (Dryden and Howard)



Dryden drops the veil of Platonic dialogue to address his critic directly, in his own voice. He suggests Howard is lowered simply by attacking someone of lower rank and then slyly praises him for choosing a weak position from which to argue. Dryden combats Howard's personal attacks by shielding himself not in ranked civility, as Howard does, but in his own confirmed intellectualism. He reinforces this later on in the *Defence*, "But I am not now to defend my own Cause, when that of all the Ancients and the Moderns is in question: for this Gentleman who accuses me of arrogance, has taken a course not to be taxed with the other extreme of modesty" (Dryden and Howard). Dryden entraps Howard by moving the goalposts away from personal attack, suggesting that Howard has attacked "all the Ancients and Moderns" and that he, Dryden, is in the position of defending them. This, of course, is the best personal attack of all.

There are key differences between Dryden's exchange with Howard and Shakespeare's exchanges with his rivals. Unlike Shakespeare's intertextual barbs and borrowings, Dryden and Howard's rivalry is mostly paratextual, occurring in prefaces, letters, commendatory poems, and critical essays. In fact, Dryden's attacks move from more literary, in the *Essay of Dramatick Poesie*, to more direct in the *Defence*. Though Shakespeare clearly has disagreements with his rivals about how plays should be written, they are never made as explicit as the public critical discussion between Howard and Dryden, and Shakespeare's concerns are never inflated to the international and cross-temporal debates that Dryden and his contemporaries have about French and ancient drama. However, Dryden's rivalry here, like Shakespeare's various exchanges, do get personal quickly, delving into issues of class, education, and personality. And most importantly, Dryden strengthens and develops his position, as Shakespeare does, through his discussion with a rival. Even as early as "To My Honored Friend, Sir Robert Howard," in their friendlier period, Dryden defines his critical stance using Howard as a reflection of what is good in poetry. As Howard's positions turn against his own, Dryden uses Howard an example of what

is critically bad, but the device of using another to reinforce one's own beliefs remains the same. Dryden continues the same reinforcing, collaborative tendency with his rivals even as the exchanges become more acrimonious and personal.

Dryden had a number of famous noble enemies in addition to Howard, including the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Rochester. But Dryden also had rivals among his playwright peers, and one, Thomas Shadwell, is famous today mainly because Dryden singled him out for ridicule. In some ways, the story of Shadwell and Dryden unfolded similarly to that of Howard and Dryden, with the exception that a lack of difference in their rank removed some of the niceties that were exchanged in the more uneven match. Shadwell and Dryden started as peers and sometime collaborators, writing similar but divergent dramatic works, until they were embroiled in a critical debate over dramatic form.

Though they shared stationers and patrons, by the mid-1670s they were expressing their professional rivalry through debate over taste and authority (Dryden, *Selected Poems* 531). In his dedication to *The Virtuoso* in 1676, Shadwell wrote of Dryden,

Nor do I hear of any professed enemies to the play, but some women, and some men of feminine understandings, who like slight plays only, that represent a little tattle sort of conversation like their own; but true humour is not like or understood by them. But the same people, to my great comfort, damn all Mr. Jonson's plays.<sup>65</sup>

Shadwell refers here to Dryden's position, laid out in the "Defense of the Epilogue," that Jonson "often fell into meanness of expression", but the character of his attack is overwhelmingly personal and insulting (Dryden, *Selected Poems* 531). Dryden is a man of "feminine understanding" whose preference for a "little tattle sort of conversation" blinds him from the greatness of Jonson's plays as well as the suitability of Shadwell's. Shadwell belittles Dryden

---

<sup>65</sup>This quotation found on A3r, quoted in Dryden (*Selected Poems*) 531.

while also misrepresenting Dryden's complex position on Jonson as laid out in the *Essay of Dramatick of Poesie*, the *Defence of An Essay*, the "Defense of the Epilogue," and elsewhere. Dryden, of course, cannot let this stand.

The response Dryden comes up with departs from his usual *modus operandi* in the public feuds for which he is so famous—instead of another prose essay or paratext refuting Shadwell's arguments point by point, Dryden writes *MacFlecknoe*, one of the most famous and devastating satiric poems in the language. Dryden takes the public argument as an occasion for poetic inspiration, and he converts his anger at and dismissal of Shadwell into generic experimentation and creative output. *MacFlecknoe* is the first major mock-epic of the period. Dryden uses the new form as an opportunity to attack Shadwell from all sides, and all the while "he never gets angry, never descends from the Olympian level he establishes in the first lines, never loses his poise" (Dryden, *Selected Poems* 531). *MacFlecknoe* is not just a salvo in a rivalrous exchange, but a creative flourish of antipathy that allowed Dryden to obliterate his rival and end the argument for the foreseeable future.

Because the poem is so devastating, it is difficult to see how it could constitute an exchange or collaboration between the poet and one who "never deviates into sense" (line 20). Unlike with a rival like Howard, for whom some respect seems to be left, Dryden does not draw or strengthen his critical positions in response to Shadwell's attacks. Instead, *MacFlecknoe* seems to find glee in belittling his opponent without high-minded critical positions. In the poem, Shadwell "stands confirmed in full stupidity" (18) and swears "that he till death true dullness would maintain" (115). Many of the insults and criticisms leveled at Shadwell come through comparison to bad poets from previous ages, especially Richard Flecknoe, Thomas Dekker, and John Ogilby. But despite the complexity of the references, Dryden for the most part does not seem to draw directly

from Shadwell's attacks in forming his response, except in a brief passage in which Flecknoe reminds Shadwell not to "let false friends seduce thy mind to fame / By arrogating Jonson's hostile name" (171-2). Nonetheless, I argue that Shadwell, by serving as inspiration—even muse—for the poem, unwittingly acts as a kind of collaborator. Dryden is lifted up and energized by the attacks on his rival, working in a new genre and even riffing wittily on Shadwell's name in the famous line, "But loads of Sh— almost choked the way" (103). Dryden took advantage of the public argument with Shadwell as raw material for poetic experimentation, turning a bad situation into a poetic achievement. To Dryden's dismay, this very technique would be used against him by another rival with much more talent than Shadwell.

Despite differences of social status and sensibility, Dryden and Rochester started out on what we can only surmise were good terms. Soon after Dryden's appointment as laureate in 1668, he acquired Rochester as patron. Dryden's dedication of *Marriage A-la-Mode* to Rochester is the first record we have of their interaction, and in it Dryden navigates their relationship with characteristic aplomb. Alert to differences of class, Dryden stresses his debts to Lord Rochester, to the "amendment" the play has received "from your [Rochester's] noble hands" (4). We do not know how much Rochester had to do with the play on stage or in print, but what we seem to have is the traditional framework of collaboration, with Dryden receiving suggestions and corrections from his patron, and Rochester, in his turn, writing his Letter from Artemiza in the Town to Chloe in the Country with Dryden's play in clearly in mind. Though it is impossible to know whether Rochester had amended Dryden's play or simply read it before writing the poem, Dryden credits his writerly success to mere acceptance into Rochester's inner circle. The laureate claims "little experience of a court" (27-8), and this strategic modesty softens what might seem to be contention hidden beneath a veil of compliment: "Your Lordship has but another step to make, and from the patron of wit you may become its tyrant, and oppress our little reputations

with more ease than you now protect them. But these, my Lord, are designs which I am sure you harbor not, any more than the French king is contriving the conquest of the Swissers” (107-12). Class was already at issue at this early stage in the relationship. In Dryden’s analogy, Rochester has the potential to become Louis XIV, the aristocratic and powerful Catholic tyrant who hovers threateningly but (for now) passively over a Protestant state. And further, Dryden also points us to distinctions of writerly cast: almost all of Dryden’s work was printed, and he was especially concerned with shaping the responses of his reading public. Rochester had no such concerns: none of his poems appear in print, and their manuscript circulation among a coterie suggests a disregard for any broader notions of a reading public. For Dryden to find that Rochester has outdone him in manuscript verse is a glancing wound, not a fatal one, and the two act out this media opposition—manuscript vs. print as a manifestation of the wit/professional divide—over the course of their friendship and rivalry. They respond to one another not only in a way particular to their own literary style, but also in the medium that reflects their social status and sensibility. Aristocratic Rochester relies on distributing his thoughts on Dryden through aristocratic and courtly manuscript networks, while professional Dryden brings his praise and criticism of Rochester to a wider public through print.

From this early period of friendship, the material from Rochester’s side is scant, however, a passage from Rochester’s *A Letter from Artemiza in the Town to Chloe in the Country*, likely written in the year or two following Dryden’s letter, provides some insight into Rochester’s side of literary relations with his client. Rochester’s poem nests speakers within other speakers, one of who is the “fine lady” Artemiza encounters. The idiom in which the fine lady speaks would have been familiar from *Marriage A-la-Mode* and, of course, beyond the play that idiom would have echoed the speech patterns of courtiers and would-be courtiers:

Let me die,  
I find myself ridiculously grown  
Embarrassé with being out of Town,  
Rude, and untaught, like any Indian queen;  
My country nakedness is strangely seen.  
How is Love governed— Love that rules the state,  
And, pray, who are the men most worn of late?  
When I was married, fools were a la mode,  
The men of wit were then held incommode: (96-104)

“Let me die” is Melantha’s favorite phrase in Dryden’s play, one that she uses repeatedly throughout. Likewise, the fine lady’s use of “embarrassé” calls to mind Melantha’s appropriation of French words in her daily conversation. Add to that the references to “married” and “a la mode” in the same line—as well as the apparent reference to Dryden and Robert Howard’s play *The Indian Queen* —, and surely Rochester had Dryden in mind when he wrote this passage. However, it is not entirely clear what Rochester’s attitude is toward Dryden in these moments. Could the transparent social climbing of Dryden’s character and Rochester’s fine lady be applied to Dryden himself? Dryden’s widely-known awkwardness in reaching above his station, parodied to great effect in *The Rehearsal*, may be reflected in Melantha, who seems so awkward in her attempts to rise above her own rank. And if Melantha reenacts many of the traits Dryden sees in himself, how much of that does Rochester understand in the fine lady of Artemiza to Chloe? Does Rochester reveal in the passage that he saw what Dryden was doing with Melantha? Though we might also ask if Dryden saw what he was doing with Melantha? Perhaps then the poem is a transition text in the shift from affinity to enmity.

We cannot know exactly when Dryden and Rochester’s relationship goes south, but *Artemiza to Chloe* was written only about a year before *An Allusion to Horace*, Rochester’s blistering satire

of Dryden. Perhaps no single event turned the two from friends to enemies, though Dryden's change of clientage from Rochester to the Earl of Mulgrave, Rochester's rival, seems to participate in the sudden shift. We do not know whether Dryden went to Mulgrave because of his unraveling relationship with Rochester, or whether the conflict between Rochester and Dryden made Mulgrave approach Dryden as a client. Either way, Rochester was sufficiently incensed by late 1675 to write *An Allusion to Horace*, lampooning Dryden's self-fashioning as an English Horace-figure. That said, the way in which Rochester critiques Dryden creates similar conditions for exchange to those that prevailed in their relationship's earlier stage: Rochester offers advice and makes constructive observations, even while exposing Dryden's weaknesses.

And importantly, the *Allusion* reveals Rochester's familiarity with Dryden's work, and not just familiarity but an intimacy not common to simple social or political rivals. The fact that they were once close is important to the way they interact going forward. In the poem, Rochester savages Dryden immediately and by name: "Well sir, 'tis granted I said Dryden's rhymes, / Were stolen, unequal, nay dull many times" (1-2). And note the hierarchy of Dryden's faults: plagiarism first, then metrics, and worst of all, dullness. And Rochester makes room for Mulgrave in his critique: "What foolish patron is there found of his? / So blindly partial to deny me this" (3-4). And yet for all of Rochester's protestations about courtly poets and their superiority over professional ones, by attacking Dryden he seems to mark him as an equal; Dryden is a writer of enough consequence to warrant Rochester's satiric attention.

Rochester lays the groundwork in this poem for other kinds of exchange that Dryden will take up in his responses. Critical of Dryden for his lack of respect for courtly wits, Rochester stresses Dryden's ambition, his naked striving: ". . . send a cunning friend to learn thy doom / From the shrewd judges in the drawing-room" (108-9). The courtly, "drawing-room" poets are the only

true judges of literature in Rochester's estimation. This excludes poets like Dryden and the audiences to and for whom he writes. Rochester and Dryden give one another someone against whom to define their positions, and later, in print, that is exactly what Dryden will do.

Dryden makes his longest sustained response to the *Allusion to Horace* in his preface to *All for Love* where he surely gives back as good as he got from Rochester in the *Allusion*. The evidence that the *Allusion* stung Dryden is clear in the way he directly responds to the poem's particular insults. Rochester refers to Dryden as "Poet Squab," and Dryden counters by calling Rochester one of his "sucking critics." Of course the exchange occurs in more registers than just name-calling. What for Rochester was a healthy English value for courtly wit is to Dryden subservience to French ways; he denounces Rochester as one of the "Chedreux critics" (133). And he derides Rochester in the same way that his former patron derided him, by accusing him of nakedly striving. He does this by asserting, "The rich are discontented because the poets will not admit them of their number" (200-1). This puts Dryden and his fellow professional poets in the position of power. Dryden does not foolishly misunderstand the patronage system; he still knows how much he needs the assistance of patrons. But he is also adept with the social economy of patronage, letting Rochester know in certain terms that he is well aware that patrons are elevated by their association with poets. And Dryden argues throughout by mimicking his opponent's argument. He seals this argument with the statement, "We who write, if we want the talent, yet have the excuse that we do it for a poor subsistence; but what can be urged in their defense who, not having the vocation of poverty to scribble, out of mere wantonness take pains to make themselves ridiculous?" (193-7). Whereas Rochester believed in the *Allusion* that Dryden and others should be ashamed for chasing after "scraps and coach-room," Dryden embraces the need for money from patrons as a central part of the identity of the poet. As he says



in a story within the dedication about Nero and Dionysius, Dryden is a firm believer that “the true poets were they who made the best markets” (227).

But Dryden’s sharpest attacks come when he turns away from poetry generally to Rochester’s person. In a deliciously angry passage, Dryden accuses Rochester, whom he once praised as writing “the best language I have read,” of complete illiteracy: “For my part, I would wish no other revenge, either for myself or the rest of the poets, from this rhyming judge of the twelvepenny gallery, this legitimate son of Sternhold, than that he would subscribe his name to his censure or (not to tax him beyond his learning) set his mark” (279-84). Rochester’s manuscript poems were circulated anonymously, and though Dryden was no stranger to anonymous publication he had come under fire for verses printed under his name. For revenge, Dryden wants Rochester to own up to his own poems, because he believes they are bad enough that Rochester would embarrass himself if his identity were made public. And the insult goes further, Rochester is to “set his mark,” not literate enough to sign his own name. Of course, it was widely known that Rochester had written the Allusion to Horace and his other poems even if his name was not ascribed to them. Dryden wishes on Rochester the same fate that has befallen him: that he become publicly humiliated for his poetry.

Dryden finishes his attack with a puzzling statement about whether Rochester is a worthy opponent: “I leave him to interpret this by the benefit of his French version on the other side, and without farther considering him than I have the rest of my illiterate censors, whom I have disdained to answer because they are not qualified for judges” (313-7). The problem with these lines is that Dryden has already “farther considered” Rochester. Like Rochester’s long poem about Dryden, who was apparently not worth a second thought, the very fact that the attack exists at all seems to suggest that the author thought the target was worth attacking. If Rochester were

really like the other “illiterate censors” and “unqualified judges” who he has “disdained to answer,” Dryden would not have bothered answer him. We know from MacFlecknoe that Dryden was certainly not afraid to answer those who he thought were beneath him, but I wonder if what this protestation actually does is reveal that Dryden still has some respect left for his old patron. If Rochester’s poem was worth such a long treatment in prose, does his judgment still matter to Dryden, at least in part?

Toward the end of the 1670s, Rochester seems to turn his attentions away from the rivalry with Dryden somewhat and toward Dryden’s patron Mulgrave. He takes another stab at both of them in *An Epistolary Essay, from M.G. to O.B. upon their Mutual Poems*. Though we cannot be certain of the poem’s true referents, O.B likely stands for Old Bays, a reference to Dryden as laureate used in *The Rehearsal*. Though there are plenty of delightful satirical attacks here (Rochester, in the voice of Mulgrave, associates his enemy’s writing with farting in lines 35-7), it should not go unnoticed that Rochester is dramatizing here a letter from a patron, himself a poet, to his poet-client. This is precisely where things began, with Rochester and Dryden writing complimentary letters to one another. Now the relationship is between Dryden and Rochester’s rival, and we find Rochester lampooning the patron-client relationship. Still, there is plenty in the poem that seems to echo Rochester’s own thinking: “There’s not a thing on earth that I can name / So foolish and so false as common fame” (89-90). There was so much of this material in the poem that, as Paul Davis notes, “modern commentators... regarded it as an expression of R[ochester]’s own moral and aesthetic creed until 1963” (127). The notion that a satire in the voice of Rochester’s main rivals could be perceived as an expression of his own beliefs is a difficult pill to swallow, but not if we consider the ways in which Rochester’s relationship to Dryden, both in friendship and rivalry, was always an exchange of ideas about poetic talent and the value, or lack thereof, of “common fame.” With this in mind, it is not so much of a surprise

that Rochester's parody of the patron-client relationship might have echoes of his own fraught relationship with his former client.

Like Dryden's relationship with Howard and Shadwell, the rivalry between Rochester and Dryden rivalry extends the productive relationship found in their earlier, traditional collaboration. The two do not create something new together in spite of their contest, but rather because of it. Though we use the term deterioration to describe a relationship that has transformed into a rivalry, the productive energies generated by Dryden and Rochester's antipathy show ongoing joint creation, and the use of one another as the basis for aesthetic attack. The writing created by this mutual detraction addresses almost every point on which the authors disagree—literary reputation, the author's career, the relation between print and manuscript—, and each counterpoint moves the debate forward.

### 4.3 Shakespeare and Dryden

A preoccupation with Elizabethan playwrights hangs over all of Dryden's rivalries. Fletcher, Shakespeare, and especially Jonson are central to the critical arguments that Dryden has with his contemporaries. The Restoration world, with its newly reinstated theatrical culture, was obsessed with the drama of the previous period, newly performing Elizabethan and Jacobean plays and creating adaptations of the same. When chartering the Duke's Company, one of only two new theatrical companies created after 1660, Charles II granted to the company's first manager, William Davenant, exclusive rights to ten of Shakespeare's plays—a nod to the ongoing commercial value of Shakespeare specifically. The Duke's Company became known first for its performances of Shakespeare's originals and then for its Shakespearean adaptations. Dryden, through his association with Davenant, wrote two adaptations for the Duke's Company—*The Enchanted Island* (an adaptation of *The Tempest* written in collaboration with Davenant in 1667)

and more than a decade later in 1679, *Troilus and Cressida*—, and one for the competing King’s Company in 1677—*All for Love*, an adaptation of of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

These adaptations share some common features. As stories that feature women predominantly, the new plays are well-positioned to take advantage of the appearance of women actors on the Restoration stage. Dryden seems interested in reworking Shakespeare’s stories of tragic love, perhaps an extension of his career-long fascination with female characters in his comedies as well. Dryden’s habits of adaptation are sometimes additive: rather than excising or radically changing large portions of Shakespeare’s plots (as Nahum Tate does in his infamous change to the ending of *King Lear*), in his first two adaptations Dryden adds characters and subplots to Shakespeare’s works and makes new resonances out of the well-known material. Finally, all three adaptations create occasions for long disquisitions on dramatic form and style. As with his living rivals, Dryden uses the interaction to strengthen his own critical stance. In this case his collaborator is long dead, but the spirit of joint work seems alive within Dryden, as he explains to his readers in the prefaces to each of the adaptations.

The preface to Dryden’s first adaptation, *The Enchanted Island*, is his shortest and least technical. He devotes most of it to praise of his collaborator, William Davenant, who died just before the play was printed. Dryden politely attributes most of the play’s good qualities to his older collaborator, but the essay includes a subtle streak of insecurity. Dryden begins by listing the other adaptations of *The Tempest*, notably Fletcher’s *The Sea-Voyage* and Suckling’s *The Goblins* (Dryden and D’Avenant, A2v). By mentioning these earlier plays Dryden establishes that adaptation is not a new imposition on Shakespeare, but a common practice. From there he describes the particulars of what he and Davenant have done to Shakespeare’s plays, especially the added characters and plots:

But Sir William Davenant, as he was a man of quick and piercing imagination, soon found that somewhat might be added to the Design of Shakespear, of which neither Fletcher nor Suckling had ever thought: and therefor to put the last hand to it, he design'd the Counterpart to Shakespear's Plot, namely that of a Man who had never seen a Woman; that by this means those two Characters of Innocence and Love might the more illustrate and commend each other. This excellent contrivance he was pleas'd to communicate to me, and to desire my assistance in it. I confess from the very first moment it so pleas'd me, that I never writ any thing with more delight (Dryden and D'Avenant, A2v).

He positions Davenant, and by extension himself, at the head of the group of adapters on account of their idea to add a new character to double Miranda. Dryden describes the idea as a source of “delight,” one that causes an outpouring of pleasure from the two authors. Modern critics tend to think of influence and imitation as fraught work, under the pressure of living up to the great minds of the past. Dryden describes the process of rewriting Shakespeare as playful and energetic. His position will change slightly later in his career, but his first encounter with Shakespeare seems full of pleasure.

Davenant and Shakespeare are the two major figures of Dryden's preface, and Dryden puts them on equal footing. He tells us that in the process of writing, Davenant “borrowed not of any other; and his imaginations were such as could not easily enter into any other man” (Dryden and D'Avenant, A3r). Of course Davenant is borrowing from Shakespeare and working directly with Dryden, but Dryden seems eager to emphasize that no other voices interposed and to defend the singular genius of Davenant. This is an odd move in an essay that so readily acknowledges intertextuality, but the elevation of Davenant makes more sense in the context of Dryden's conclusion: “I am satisfi'd I could never have receiv'd so much honour in being thought the

Author of any Poem how excellent soever, as I shall from the joining my imperfections with the merit and name of Shakespear and Sir William Davenant” (Dryden and D’Avenant, A3v).

Davenant needs to be made a singular figure so that he can stand as Shakespeare’s equal—Dryden as it were allowing his friend to ascend to the authorial pantheon. And Dryden’s relation to the two figures is crucial. He joins his “imperfections” to their joint “merit.” Shakespeare is brought into Davenant and Dryden’s present-day collaboration just as Davenant (and Dryden by modest extension) is elevated to Shakespeare’s heights. For Dryden, Shakespeare exists as both authorial demigod and working contemporary.

This dichotomy is made more explicit in the preface to *All for Love*, in which Dryden seeks to defend his “Imitation of Shakespeare’s Stile,” in the words of the book’s title page. Dryden begins the essay in the same way, by pointing out how many authors have attempted to write the story of *Antony and Cleopatra*. These writers adapt the story “all so variously, that their Example has given me the confidence to try my self in this Bowe of Ulysses amongst the Crowd of Sutors; and, withal, to take my own measures, in aiming at the Mark” (Dryden, *All For Love, or, The World Well Lost*, B1r). Dryden’s choice of metaphor here is very telling. He, Shakespeare, and the others who have written of these events, are all in the same “Crowd of Sutors” despite being separated by generations. Dryden imagines himself in competition with these authors across time, and he considers the play an opportunity to test himself, to take his “own measures.” Of course, the martial, competitive language is unsurprising when we consider that this is the same essay in which Dryden attacks his contemporary Rochester as “Rhyming judge of the Twelve-penny Gallery” (Dryden, *All For Love, or, The World Well Lost*, B3r). The spirit of competition seems to imbue this preface across a number of social and authorial arenas.

In this spirit, Dryden criticizes Shakespeare a bit more openly in the preface, though he still includes plenty of deference. He points out that Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is perhaps overly slavish to the Unities, an odd criticism considering the usual knock against Shakespeare that he ignores the Unities in most of his works. While acknowledging that some of Shakespeare's language is out of date, Dryden reserves awe for Shakespeare's genius:

I hope I need not to explain my self, that I have not Copy'd my Author servilely: Words and Phrases must of necessity receive a Change in succeeding Ages: but 'tis almost a Miracle that much of his Language remains so pure; and that he who began Dramatick Poetry amongst us, untaught by any, and, as Ben. Johnson tells us, without Learning, should by the force of his own Genius perform so much, that in a manner he has left no Praise for any who come after him (Dryden, *All For Love, or, The World Well Lost*, B3v).

Dryden repeats Jonson's assertion—and one of the earliest criticism of Shakespeare—that he was uneducated, but he suggests that this adds another layer of genius to Shakespeare's art. To Dryden, Shakespeare is a kind of pure talent who manages greatness in spite of himself.

While praising Shakespeare's brilliance and consistency of style, Dryden has to admit to his own inconsistency. The heroic couplets that he so ardently defended against his many contemporary rivals are dropped here in imitation of Shakespeare: "In my Stile I have profess'd to imitate the Divine Shakespeare; which that I might perform more freely, I have disincumber'd my self from Rhyme. Not that I condemn my former way, but that this is more proper to my present Purpose" (Dryden, *All For Love, or, The World Well Lost*, B3v). Dryden suggests that even his formerly unassailable dramatic principles must give way in the face of this "present Purpose." Dryden is trying on the stylistic clothes of another in this imitation, and in doing so temporarily gives up the form for which he was famous.

Dryden ends this preface with a hint of what is to come in the next one: “The occasion is fair, and the Subject would be pleasant to handle the different of Stiles betwixt him and Fletcher, and wherein, and how far they are both to be imitated. But since I must not be over-confident of my own performance after him, it will be prudence in me to be silent” (Dryden, *All For Love, or, The World Well Lost*, B3v). This comparison takes up the bulk of the preface to Dryden’s *Troilus and Cressida*, which is a more straightforward adaptation rather than the imitation of *All for Love*. For a moment, Dryden considers his own hubris, the possibility of becoming “over-confident” in the task of imitating Shakespeare. In the two years between the two plays, this prudence is swept away, and Dryden plunges headlong into a much more detailed and critical view of Shakespearean adaptation.

Dryden begins this essay with a new tactic. Rather than pointing out the many contemporary Shakespearean adaptations, he compares Shakespeare to Aeschylus, who, Dryden tells us, was also revered by his literary successors and frequently imitated. He confronts both positive and negative responses to Aeschylus among ancient authors, and acknowledges that both are valid responses to Shakespeare. His main complaint about Shakespeare’s writing is that it is outdated to the point that it is difficult to understand:

Yet it must be allow’d to the present Age, that the tongue in general is so much refin’d since Shakespear’s time, that many of his words, and more of his Phrases, are scarce intelligible. And of those which we understand some are ungrammatical, others course; and his whole stile is so pester’d with Figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure. ’Tis true, that in his



later Plays he had worn off somewhat of the rust; but the Tragedy which I have undertaken to **correct**, was, in all probability, one of his first endeavours on the Stage<sup>66</sup>.

It is this assertion, that Dryden believes it his responsibility to “correct” Shakespeare’s work, rather than simply add to it or adjust it, that represents that biggest departure from his previous attempts at adaptation. By reorganizing the plots and scene structure, “improving” and adding characters, and updating the language, Dryden sees it as his purpose “to remove that heap of Rubbish, under which many excellent thoughts lay wholly bury’d” (Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late a Tragedy, as It Is Acted at the Dukes Theatre*, A4v-a1r). Dryden does not attribute all of this “Rubbish” to Shakespeare directly—he believes that many of the problems he sees in the play are the fault of copyists and printers, but he nonetheless sees it as his mission to remake the play into something better by removing and changing those things which in his estimation cloud the nuggets of genius hidden within: “If Shakespear were stript of all the Bombast in his passions, and dress’d in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remaining; if his embroideries were burnt down, there would still be silver at the bottom of the melting-pot” (Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late a Tragedy, as It Is Acted at the Dukes Theatre*, b3v). However, Dryden walks a fine line, insofar as he attempts not to blame Shakespeare for these “ills.” Instead he puts the onus on the adapters: “Therefore, let not Shakespear suffer for our sakes; ’tis our fault, who succeed him in an Age which is more refin’d, if we imitate him so ill, that we copy his failings only, and make a virtue of that in our Writing, which in his was an imperfection” (Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late a Tragedy, as It Is Acted at the Dukes Theatre*, b3v). The present day writer must therefore be both steward of Shakespeare’s good ideas and thoughtful pruner of the bad, constantly weighing different parts of the work against one another.

---

<sup>66</sup>emphasis mine, Dryden (*Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late a Tragedy, as It Is Acted at the Dukes Theatre*), A4v

Dryden takes this responsibility to heart in the long preface. He goes into great detail about all the changes he made to plot, language, and character in the play, and he shows off his understanding of Shakespeare's work by laying out the similarities and differences between him and Fletcher, perhaps the more popular playwright on the Restoration stage. In Dryden's imagining, Shakespeare is imagined as having rivals, and it is up to Dryden, diligent adapter and faithful critic, to judge the better among Shakespeare's contemporaries. Dryden turns Shakespeare and Fletcher into opposites, a distortion of the more complimentary playwrights that they actually were (Fletcher succeeded Shakespeare as main playwright for the King's Men). In his formula, one is passionate while the other is compassionate, one masculine and the other feminine:

The difference between Shakespear and Fletcher in their Plotting seems to be this, that Shakespear generally moves more terror, and Fletcher more compassion: For the first had a more Masculine, a bolder and more fiery Genius; the Second a more soft and Womanish. In the mechanic beauties of the Plot, which are the Observations of the three Unities, Time, Place, and Action, they are both deficient; but Shakespear most. Ben. Johnson reform'd those errors in his Comedies, yet one of Shakespear's was Regular before him: which is, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late a Tragedy, as It Is Acted at the Dukes Theatre*, a3r).

Note the implicit hierarchy here. Shakespeare is easily coming out the better in the imagined competition between him and Fletcher, but they are judged both "deficient" in comparison to Jonson, who Dryden praises in all of his critical essays. Even in a comparison of two different authors, Jonson works his way into the struggle. Whether out of reverence, disinterest, or lack of popularity, Dryden never adapts any of Jonson's plays, or any Fletcher plays for that matter. The

exercise of comparing Shakespeare to Fletcher (and to Jonson) then is in part to establish his own credentials as a fit inheritor of Shakespeare's pen. In the activity of comparison, Dryden moves away from his critical take on Shakespeare's failings in *Troilus and Cressida*, and instead moves to the task of dismantling Fletcher. He writes, "Shakespear had an Universal mind, which comprehended all Characters and Passions ... To conclude all; he [Fletcher] was a Limb of Shakespear" (Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late a Tragedy, as It Is Acted at the Dukes Theatre*, b3v). Finally Dryden reveals that the imagined competition between Fletcher and Shakespeare is no competition at all. Fletcher is only a "Limb" of Shakespeare, a lesser successor. Dryden implies here that the he, Dryden, who so capably understands Shakespeare's strength and weaknesses, is the only worthy peer. By attacking Fletcher under the pretense of comparison, he reinforces his own position as adapter.

Influence, following Bloom, is often thought of as patricidal—the father poet must be killed off so that the successor can prevail. At first, Dryden seems to move in this direction, but he makes a decisive pivot to a more fratricidal tendency. Instead of battling Shakespeare, he does battle with Shakespeare's contemporaries, installing himself as the only worthy partner to Shakespeare, even at a remove of a half century. Dryden treats Shakespeare (and his contemporaries, like Fletcher and Jonson) the same way the he treats his own contemporaries—while he has disagreements and arguments, he is able to create poetic energy out of his various competitions. Dryden would never want to conquer the memory of Shakespeare. Such an erasure of his influence would not be useful to him. Instead he locks Shakespeare into his own writing as a collaborator and as a rival.

There are many examples of rivalrous collaborators throughout the early modern period. This snapshot of Shakespeare and Dryden is a distillation of a wider phenomenon—in a literary

culture in which so much of the art was built on shared labor and intertextual reference, there was little reason to cast aside good ideas even when they came from competitors. In the worlds of both Shakespeare and Dryden, lines of collaboration and competition were constantly shifting and coming from many different directions. One day's competitors are the next day's allies against a new literary rival. For Shakespeare, social relations with other authors were always collaborative, built into the shared labor of theater companies and the London dramatic community. For Dryden, the experience of collaborators turning to rivals was often sudden and driven by personal antipathy, but Dryden still always found ways to learn from and exchange material with his competitors. Even in the case of drawing poetic inspiration from rivalry, as both poets did in markedly different ways, Dryden and Shakespeare never allowed competition to spell the end of literary exchange.

Rivalry is one aspect of the workings of literary personality within collaborative networks. Authors always work with each other, even as they work against each other, but this does not mean that their individual personalities are subsumed within an impersonal system. Though rivalry is often driven by economic realities, political alliances, and professional jealousy, it is also an outpost of the personal feelings of authors. Within these authorial networks, individuals maintain their emotions—they are never disinterested actors. Among rivals, I have shown how antipathy can be a generative force, creating novel avenues for creative output. In the next chapter, I will explore literary personality within networks further by discussing a coterie that is knit together by emotions both positive and negative.

## Works Cited

- Bednarz, James P. *Shakespeare & The Poets' War*. New York: Columbia UP, 2001. Print.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997. Print.
- Dryden, John. *All For Love, or, The World Well Lost*. Ed. William Shakespeare. London: H. Herringman, 1692. Print. Early English Books Online.
- . *Selected Poems*. London: Penguin UK, 2001. Print.
- . *Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late*. London: Able Swall and Jacob Tonson, 1679. Print. Early English Books Online.
- Dryden, John, and William D'Avenant Sir. *The Tempest, or, The Enchanted Island*. Ed. William D'Avenant Sir. London: Henry Herringman, 1670. Print. Early English Books Online.
- Dryden, John, and Robert Howard. *Of Dramatick Poesie: An Essay. With Sir Robert Howard's Preface to The Great Favourite and Dryden's Defence of an Essay*. Ed. James T. Boulton. London: Oxford UP, 1964. Print.
- Fossen, R. W. Van, ed. *Eastward Ho!: Chapman, Jonson and Marston*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2006. Print.
- Greenblatt, Stephen et al., eds. *The Norton Shakespeare*. Third edition. New York: Norton, 2015. Print.
- Howard, Robert. *Four New Plays . as They Were Acted by His Majesties Servants at the Theatre-Royal*. Ed. John Dryden. London: Henry Herringman, 1665. Print. Early English Books Online.
- Howard, Robert, Sir. *Poems*. London: Henry Herringman, 1696. Print. Early English Books Online.
- Jonson, Ben. *The Comickall Satyre of Euery Man Out of His Humor*. London: William Holme, 1600. Print. Early English Books Online.
- McDonald, Russ. *Shakespeare & Jonson, Jonson & Shakespeare*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1988. Print.
- Shapiro, James. *Rival Playwrights: Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. Print.
- Van Es, Bart. *Shakespeare in Company*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.

# Coterie Culture and Authorial Persona in the Poetry of Katherine Philips

In the previous chapter, I explored relationships ruled by negative emotions. Animosity is a powerful driver for collaboration, knitting people closely together while still allowing exchange and growth to take place in their work. Though competition is powerful, the collaborative force of emotions is not limited to rivalrous relationships. Social relations are made of emotions—the relationships between people are bound by affect, and these feelings often drive creative work.<sup>67</sup> The emotional weight of social relations is not a new discovery, but often in the course of thinking with networks—in representing people as nodes and relationships as vehicles for social exchange—it is easy to lose sight of emotional realities and think of sociality as a vast machine.<sup>68</sup> However the lived experiences of early modern authors, as so many critics have recorded, run counter to a mechanistic view of writing. This is certainly the case with Dryden, whose ironies and rivalries are often revealed in his collaborative relations. For Katherine Philips, emotion became a vector for her own authorial voice, allowing her to elide her coterie practices and increase her personal fame even as she praised the virtues of friendship and doted

---

<sup>67</sup>“Emotional differentiations fuel social relationships, not always in pleasant ways” (Matt and Stearns 6).

<sup>68</sup>Philips’s work also exemplifies an important theoretical connection between the study of networks and of affect—as if they were two branches of the same theoretical tree. Actor-network theory and theories of affect have a common ancestor in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, whose study of assemblages can equally be applied to the object-filled networks of Latour and the body-emotion linkages in the work of affect theorists such as Brian Massumi. Simply because networks are frequently used to describe technological formations, it can be easy to dismiss affect as extrinsic to network interaction. But feeling has always been part of the language of assemblage, and actor-network theorists are as indebted to the rhizomes of *A Thousand Plateaus* as affect theorists are. Furthermore Deleuze traces his philosophic ancestry to seventeenth-century monist Baruch Spinoza, and as Melissa Gregg points out, “Deleuze’s Spinozan route locates affect in the midst of things and relations (in immanence) and, then, in the complex assemblages that come to compose bodies and worlds simultaneously” (Gregg and Seigworth 6). Latour is one inheritor of this system, and as I hope to show through the work of Katherine Philips, his actor-networks, as they trace *work* in the center of both things and relations, cannot be separated from the deep feeling that drives this work (Gregg and Seigworth 12–3). Philips herself was a contemporary of Spinoza—in fact they were born in the same year. In her poetry, suffused as it is with deep feeling and a scholarly regard for friendship as the central driver of social interaction, Philips approaches the monist ideas of Spinoza in an altogether different register. Her social and emotional world is not divided and categorized but made one through her devotion to her friends as singular pursuit. If collaborative authorship is an actor-network, it is necessary to look to Philips as an example of the way authorship networks are driven and sustained by emotion.

on her poems' subjects. Katherine Philips is an example of the ways in which late-seventeenth-century authors hid or downplayed the collaborative aspects of their poetry in order to create a strong authorial persona. But despite her efforts to cover up the collaborative origins of her work, evidence of those collaborations nonetheless remains embedded in the poems themselves.

Philips famously organized her coterie as a "Society of Friendship" and assigned pet names to each of her friends, who were by turns both subjects of her verses and collaborators. She herself became known as "The Matchless Orinda" and friendship was her main subject—dozens of her poems frame, define, and expound on the concept, already a popular one in the seventeenth century but a special preoccupation for Philips. As many scholars have noted, friendship became an outlet for the many ideas and emotions Philips could not more freely express. It stood in for her devotion to Royalist causes and as a reflection of the *precieuses* culture of Queen Henrietta Maria's court, of which Philips was a part. It put her on equal footing and into dialogue with contemporary and past male writers, for whom friendship was an important classical and philosophical category. Most of all, as the dominant present-day reading of Philips's work has shown, friendship was a way to express desires and emotions among early modern women, and for Philips this deep bond was directed toward one specific woman above all others: Anne Owen, known in the verse as Lucasia. Philips's poetry seems to stake out friendship as a nearly all-powerful force—the crux of personal, political, and poetic power.<sup>69</sup>

However, while her poetry seems to distribute credit among her coterie, the force of the verse always turns back to Philips herself, reinforcing her own authorial agency. She actively encourages her public reputation as a "Matchless" poet at the expense of the coterie origins of her work, even as she extols the values of friendship. Contemporary scholars often point out the

---

<sup>69</sup>"The voice of Philips's poems can be read as synecdochal, striving to make the corporeality of the author the necessary pre-text of the poetry, to mark it as a gesture out and back to a defining origin" (Clarke, Clarke, and Loxley 234).

coded-ness of Philips's poetry: the ways in which the preciousness of the verse and the praise of friendship is an outlet for queer desire. Philips uses coded intimacy not only as a vector for desires she cannot speak directly but as a way of subsuming the multivocal origins of her poetic output. She uses friendship to encode her relationships with other individuals as part of a single unbroken self that is ultimately made equivalent with Philips-as-author. In doing so, she employs affect to obscure her poetic collaboration and increase her reputation as solitary genius.

Ironically Philips's reputation as matchless author rests on her praise of her friends and on the intentionally obscured coterie networks that lay just beneath the published verse.

A good example of the totalizing effects of Philips's concept of friendship and the ways in which she turns collective action into individual action is her discussion of the regicide in "Upon the double murder of K. Charles," one of her earliest poems. She begins the poem by explaining that the seriousness of the crime against the king has driven her to speak out: "Silence were now a sin" (Philips 7). The collective political event is the driver for individual poetic action. But she locates the tragedy of Charles's downfall not in political miscalculation but in the failure of the relationships surrounding him: "Great Charles his double misery was this, / Unfaithfull friends, ignoble enemies" (Philips 15–6). For Philips the core of Charles's difficulties were to be found in the failure of loyalty in both his friends and enemies. In these lines Philips imagines a social sphere in which both friendship and enmity, as described in the previous chapter, are both governed by rules and expectations. When these expectations break down, unthinkable acts are possible, going as far as regicide, civil war, and regime change. However, despite the gesture to external events and people, the misery still belongs to the dead King. In fact one of the poems' Royalist aims is to reinstitute Charles' authority by garnering pity for him and outrage against the regicide. Though Philips gestures to a wider world of participants in the event, she ultimately reduces it to herself, who must not remain silent, and the King, the victim of a "double misery."



Looking at Philips's career, as I will do in this chapter, it is unsurprising that she would characterize friendship as at the root of the collapse of the state even as she subtly reorganizes events in terms of her own authorship. Though Philips's poetry is the result of collaboration with a wide coterie, she builds a single-author reputation by acknowledging the community at a thematic level while taking full credit for the writing process.

Philips frequently uses the discourse of friendship as a stand-in for same-sex desire, but in addition to this coded language, she can refashion collaborative work as singularly authored by recasting her coterie collaborators and interlocutors as friends. Several models of friendship existed concurrently in the early modern period, indebted mainly from Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*. The Aristotelian model of friendship was organized around "the pursuit of virtue," and while personal feelings played a role, early modern essayists, most famously Bacon and Montaigne, who reconstituted Aristotelian friendship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, focused mainly on mutual enrichment and ennoblement rather than affective bonds.<sup>70</sup> Katherine Philips privileges female bonds over homosocial male ones, but her verse makes apparent that Philips's concept of friendship borrows from the men and women around to bolster her authorial credentials.

In "To the noble Palaemon," Philips seems to engage in an act of poetic citation. As Elizabeth Scott-Baumann points out, the poem, subtitled "on his incomparable discourse of Friendship," responds to Francis Finch, whose treatise "Friendship" was explicitly addressed to a unified persona of Philips and Anne Owen—Lucasia-Orinda (Scott-Baumann 121). Philips delivers her answer to Finch as this double persona, taking up Finch's gesture of unification from the first

---

<sup>70</sup>"Philips had presided over a 'society of friendship' and, in her verse, had elaborated distinctive notions of what it meant to be a friend. She protested against the tendency of 'men t'exclude / Women from friendship's vast capacity' and valued emotional communion over what had been the main feature of friendship in the classical tradition, the pursuit of virtue. 'The chiefest thing in Friends,' she said, 'is Sympathy... Which made two souls before they know agree'" (Reynolds 127).

lines: “*We* had been still undone” (Philips 1, emphasis mine). The response in the first person plural reinforces Finch’s point and gestures at the unity inherent in Plato’s legend of hermaphrodite, in which true friends are split from one whole, circular being and long to be reunited. Philips’s choice of name for Finch, Palaemon, echoes Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale*, an important touchstone for early modern understandings of friendship and rivalry. Naming carries enormous weight within Philips’s close-knit “society,” and the name Palaemon in the poem’s heading signals its primary function—repurposing male discourse on friendship to exalt female friendship in general and the Lucasia-Orinda union in particular. However, the secondary function of the names Philips gives to her friends and interlocutors is to hide their identities from all but a few readers who are in-the-know. The poem includes no direct mention of Finch. Pseudonyms allow Philips to create a distance between her real social network and her imagined one. In the real social network, Philips is adapting and even co-opting Finch’s texts. In the imagined social network, Palaemon is graciously welcomed into the Orinda-Lucasia orbit.

The poem’s opening expresses gratitude toward Finch that his treatise should illuminate the true nature of the Orinda-Lucasia relationship: “To shew, least we our happiness should misse, / ’Tis plac’d in Friendship, Men’s (and Angells) blisse” (Philips 8–9). Friendship gives name to their bond and prevents them from missing their happiness—assigning the classical virtue Friendship to the connection between two women gives it weight and authority, which Philips is eager to claim by inviting Finch and his masculine discourse into her society. Philips reclaims friendship’s masculine, virtuous forms in service of female bonds. She applies this same reclamation to her own authorship, ultimately obscuring Finch’s text.

Other authorial voices are pulled into Philips’s orbit in the poem. The tale of Palamon and Arcite is retold by Spenser in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene*, a fact of which Philips was clearly aware.

In addition to her poem's Donnean echoes, well-described by Scott-Baumann and others, "To the noble Palaemon" explicitly acknowledges its Spenserian antecedents:

O! for a voyce which big as thunder were,  
That all mankind thy conqu'ring truths might heare!  
Sure the Litigious as amaz'd would stand,  
As Fairy Knights touch'd with Cambina's wand.  
Nations and people would let fall their armes,  
Drawn by thy softer and yet stronger charmes:  
And what more honour could on thee be hurl'd,  
Then to protect a vertue, save a world? (Philips 21–28)

Philips (as Orinda-Lucasia) wishes for a voice as "big as thunder" with which to trumpet Finch's "conqu'ring truths." The bombastic, militarist language brings epic weight to Philips's lyric, because friendship is an epic virtue. This is reinforced by the direct reference to *The Faerie Queene*, that the "litigious," war-like people of the world would be frozen as they are "touch'd with Cambina's wand." Philips refers here to the episode in Book IV in which Cambell and Triamond, perfectly matched through different powerful enchantments, are fighting endlessly. Their struggle can only be broken by the magical Cambina, whose wand puts them into a forgetful sleep, after which friendship is possible. Philips's interest in this tale is obvious for several reasons: first, as this passage of the poem makes clear, she wishes for herself (or herself and Owen) to have the voice and power of friendship, as Cambina does, placing the power of friendship in the hands of women over men. Second, friendship is only possible after the amnesiac powers of Cambina's wand. Friendship requires forgetting. When Orinda-Lucasia wish for "a voyce which big as thunder were," they implicitly ask for the power to make others—especially men—forget. Philips's poetry is invested in the power of forgetting and making others

to forget. The ability to induce memory loss is as powerful tool for Philips-as-author as it is for Cambina. It allows her to encode her desires, of course, and it helps Philips bolster her authority by obscuring the collaborative forces behind her work. In Philips's poems, coterie collaborators become unthreatening friends. But collaboration is distinct from friendship and has a greater authorial force. By recasting coterie culture as friendship, Philips can build her reputation free of accusations that her poetic ideas are borrowed from others. This is crucial for building a reputation as a female author, but it also creates distance between the way Philips's social network worked in her life and the way her imagined social sphere operates in her work.

Philips adopts this distancing voice in a series of poems extolling friendship as a somewhat abstract virtue, in addition to the poems, which I will discuss later, that reflect on specific love objects. In both "Friendship" and "A Friend," Philips stakes out the status of friendship as a distinct subset of love. The openings of both poems use her now signature phrase, referring to love as "that noble flame" (Philips, "Friendship" l. 3, "A Friend" l. 7), but later friendship is characterized as "that abstracted flame / Which creeping mortalls know not how to name" in "Friendship" (Philips 27–8) and as "love refin'd and purg'd from all its drosse" in "A Friend" (Philips 8). Friendship, she explains, is more pure than love because it is not vulnerable to lust, it is "that Love's Elixar, that pure fire" (Philips, "Friendship" l. 37). Philips is known to be a very passionate poet, and in later sections of this essay I will address her many passions. But here Philips sees friendship as an analog to the source of virtue that classical and early modern theorists of friendship also describe. It is an art as well as a deep feeling: "Friendship (like Heraldry) is hereby known: / Richest when plainest, bravest when alone" (Philips, "Friendship" ll. 47–8). The association with heraldry is important because it describes both friendship's unadorned nature and its businesslike quality, with a governmental purpose. But what is the "drosse" that gets "purg'd" from love when it becomes friendship? Certainly lust, but also

transactions and exchange of other kinds. Philips uses friendship as a way of obscuring the economic and social drivers of her relationships. The exchange taking place behind the scenes of the poetry operates at a remove because of the way Philips's ideal of pure friendship works to obscure it.

That said, her version of friendship is so abstract, it is freely available to all, importantly and especially to women:

If no soules no sexes have, for men t'exclude

Women from friendship's vast capacity,

Is a design injurious and rude,

Onely maintain'd by partiall tyranny.

Love is allow'd to us, and Innocence,

And noblest friendships doe proceed from thence. (Philips, "A Friend" ll. 19-24)

Philips is rightly read as an advocate for same-sex attraction and homoerotic bonds in the early modern period, but here she describes friendship as a platonic linkage of souls with a "vast capacity," from which the exclusion of women is tyrannical. Women's emotions and bonds, too often regulated and feared by men, can be innocent and ennobling in Philips's argument. What is striking about this approach is that Philips argues not from the position of affect or deep feeling, but by approaching friendship philosophically and dismantling the artificial boundaries set on friendship through its own internal logic. But in the following lines Philips shows that this appeal to rationality proceeds from a place of deep feeling: "The chieftest thing in Friends is Sympathy: / There is a secret fate do's friendship guide, / Which made two souls before they know agree" (Philips 25–7). Philips establishes her basic argument about friendship from the perspective of the discourse around friendship-as-virtue, by discussing the state of the soul and friendship's ennobling effects. However she quickly pivots to the emotional and sympathetic basis on which

she builds both her friendships and her poetry. Later in “A Friend” when she arrives at the thesis “Poets and friends are born to what they are” she has recast friendship as a predetermined state of which one is made aware through sympathetic feeling (Philips 66). But of course Philips’s poetry is the result of effort and training, facilitated by coterie circulation and collaboration. Resituating poetic talent as a birthright alongside friendship distracts from the cooperation required to maintain both.

Philips reinforces this purely emotional basis for friendship in “A Dialogue of Friendship multiplied,” an imagined conversation between Musidorus and Orinda in which Orinda must defend friendship as confined to only two people. Musidorus holds that “Love that’s engross’d by one alone / Is envy, not affection” (Philips 5–6). In the course of arguing this point, Musidorus and Orinda work their way through common natural metaphors for social relation—first the sun’s rays, then forking rivers,<sup>71</sup> and finally “purest fire.” Orinda settles on a combination of the first and third metaphors to stand in for sympathetic attachment to Lucasia alone as the height of friendship: “The purity of friendship’s flame / Proves that from sympathy it came.” (Philips 23–4). Friendship in this poem is a “contracted fire,” a concentrated subset of Love (in this metaphor, the Sun) made even more powerful through the focus on a single object (Philips 28). This of course, as the final line reveals, is Lucasia, Anne Owen, the subject of many of Philips’s verses and the object of her most powerful affections.

As a poet of abstracted friendship, Philips redraws the boundaries of her social world. Through pseudonym she creates an alternative social network in her poetry. While she presents this network as a mirror of her lived experience, it leaves out much of the collaborative exchange that took place, recasting traceable cooperation into more nebulous interactions among friends. This technique gives her a way of speaking otherwise unspeakable same-sex desires, and it also

---

<sup>71</sup>For more on the force of this metaphor, see chapter one, on *Poly-Olbion*

allows her to recenter her collaborative social sphere around her authorial persona. Philips's poetry works to construct herself as an author, at the expense of her many collaborations.

The wellspring of Philips's poetry is her relationship to Owen, for as Summers describes, "Central to Philips' short life—she died of smallpox at thirty-one—was the romance with Anne Owen, and central to her poetry is the conventional representation of their involvement through the images of classical friendship and courtly love" (Stiebel 156). Philips's use of conventional representations allows her encode her relationship with Owen as something safer, and it also allows her to place Owen in the conventional position as muse to Philips's author. In reality, Owen and the other ladies of Philips's circle likely acted in a more collaborative capacity. This key social relation, itself a kind of collaboration between poet and muse, is what allows Philips to reframe both classical friendship and courtly love. However, this reframing obscures the collaboration that made it possible. Philips's poetic output is the result of Philips's and Owen's negotiation of their same-sex relationship within the complexities of the early modern "conflicting and contested sex/gender systems."<sup>72</sup> The relationship between Philips and Owen, precisely because it is queer, generates its own poetic force which is visible in many of Philips's poems despite her efforts to make it less available to readers.

In "Friendship's Mysterys," addressed to Lucasia, Philips describes their friendship as an alchemy of mind. Their "hearts are doubled by their loss," in giving up individuality they gain new double insight through unity because "mixture is addition grown" (Philips 11–2). The selves of Lucasia and Orinda, both soul and mind since "there's a religion in our Love" (Philips 5), are simultaneously erased and multiplied, they "both diffuse, and both engrosse" (Philips 13). The combination of alchemical language with religious (Lucasia and Orinda's "election is as free as Angells", a common image in Philips's poetry) reinforces the synthesis through sympathy that

---

<sup>72</sup>For the relation of authorship and collaboration to "conflicting and contested 'sex/gender systems,'" see Masten.

Philips outlines in her many reflections on friendship (Philips 9). In “A Dialogue between Lucasia and Orinda,” these two metaphors are taken up by each member of the pair, when Lucasia asserts “Friendship’s a science,” Orinda responds “Religion’s so, but practise too” (Philips 17–9). Both of these poems were presumably sung at court, as they were each set by Henry Lawes, and they focus on the simultaneous joy and longing of the Lucasia/Orinda union. Small wonder, then that Finch would address them as a single being in his discourse. However, reducing Lucasia-Orinda to an undifferentiated unity allows Philips’s to incorporate any distinct voice that Owen might have into her own. Part of Philips’s alchemy ensures that Owen has no voice of her own except through Philips, despite the role she took in the poetry’s creation as a key part of Philips’s circle.

Religion and alchemy both deal with the paradox of being split and unified at once—body and soul in the first case, gold and base in the other. It is the paradox of unity that Philips uses in her twist on courtly love. The voice of these poems is intentionally mixed. Philips presents the poems as the result of the mutual desire and mystical union of herself and Owen, but she is careful to stop short of admitting Owen’s involvement in the writing process. She illustrates this paradox in “Friendship’s Mysterys” in the lines “And we, whose minds are so much one, / Never, yet ever, are alone” (Philips 14–5). We imagine the poetry then as both belonging to Philips alone and impossible to be only hers. She is both trapped in authorial solitude and always joined by Owen. This is made even more explicit in the dialogue, in which Lucasia’s and Orinda’s voices are dramatically raised together:

*Or.* Each parting splitts.

*Luc.* and can we part?

*Or.* Our bodyes must.

*Luc.* but never we: (Philips 4–5)



Just as Lucasia and Orinda are paradoxically united through their friendship, so their voices are united in the song, finishing one another's lines. This is perhaps the most common point made in Philips poetry—that her poetic voice and her affectionate person cannot be separated out from Owen's. In "Friendship in Emblem," another poem addressed to Lucasia, the speaker is constantly tying the affectionate bond and its object back to the writing process. The subtitle of the poem, "or the Seale," suggests the seal on a letter or packet of manuscript poems. The love between Lucasia and Orinda is a binding agent, that keeps their communication safe and makes their voices indivisible. The poem begins "The hearts thus intermixed speak / A Love that no bold shock can break; / For Joyn'd and growing, both in one, / Neither can be disturb'd alone" (Philips 1–4). "Intermixed speak" is an accurate summary of the complexity of Philips's voice in action. She acknowledges that her poetry cannot be "disturb'd alone" because her union with Owen is too strong. In this poem the friendship is explicitly a tool for creating poetry, it is "that usefull instrument / For even lines was ever meant" (Philips 37–8). The metrical regularity of the poems, a major part of Philips's recognized ability as a poet, is a result of the "usefull instrument" of her relationship. Friendship in the world "governs actions best," and in poetry it is able "to rule and measure every line" (Philips 42–3). In each of the poem's last seven short stanzas, Philips places friendship at the center of the writing process, showing that the two are as unified as Orinda and Lucasia. This conventional representation of others' involvement in the writing process is safe for Philips's reputation, as it combines Owen's voice into her own without relinquishing credit to any other. Collaboration is the normal state of affairs for Philips, but she presents collaboration as a conventional relation between poet and muse, bolstering her credentials as singular author.

Philips's poetry exhibits similar attitudes and patterns of authorial self-representation when writing about her husband, James. Though Philips's feelings for Anne Owen and other women in

the Society of Friendship were clearly first for her, by all accounts Katherine and James's emotional bond was strong, as well as politically and socially useful. As with other members of her coterie, Philips's relationship with James was likely also collaborative. Evidence suggests he played a significant role in the posthumous publishing of her poetry as well, perhaps even editing or otherwise changing the work. However, as with Owen, Finch, and others, Philips's poems are careful to delimit James's involvement in the authorship of the poems, sometimes for his own political safety and sometimes to confirm Philips's identity as independent poet.

In "To my dearest Antenor, on his parting," Philips addresses her husband in many of the same terms that she uses for Owen and other close friends. She refers to their love as a "flame" that each of them were "born to" (Philips 7, 10). She describes her ability to understand him even in absence as "secret sympathy" (Philips 21). Crucially, they are repeatedly described as friends and their relationship as friendship, particularly at the poem's conclusion (Philips 30–3). Philips uses her marriage as an engine for poetry in the same way she instrumentalizes, through affect, her other friendships. James is pulled into the poem as its muse and as a collaborator. In the final lines Philips describes keeping a portrait of her husband as remembrance while he is away: "So in my brest thy Picture drawn shall be, / My guide, life, object, friend, and destiny: / And none shall know, though they employ their wit, / Which is the right Antenor, thou, or it" (Philips 35–8). The list of roles to which Antenor is assigned "guide, life, object, friend, and destiny" suggest both cooperative friendship and the relation of poet to muse. But the ambiguity of the antecedent means that these terms could refer either to Antenor himself or to the picture drawn of him: Philips induces the same confusion in the reader that she names in the final line, noting that "none shall know" which Antenor is the real one. This ambiguity could refer to the poem itself as well as the drawing she describes. Philips creates an image of James as Antenor, and does the same for poetic images of every member of her society. In doing so she blurs the line between

“friend,” “guide,” and poetic “object” such that is difficult to tell the difference between poetic invention and live person. The poem both stakes out this important status for Philips’s husband, James, but also makes clear that his status is no more privileged than any of Philips’s close friends. Importantly, it holds any collaborative involvement James may have had in the writing of the poems at arms-length.

By all accounts of the differences between James and Katherine Philips, their closeness as expressed in these poems should come as something of a surprise. As Chernaik points out in the ODNB article on Philips (James himself is not given his own article), the husband and wife were at opposite ends of the political spectrum (Chernaik). While young Katherine Philips, née Fowler, came from a Puritan-supporting family—a fact which may explain her marriage in the first place—, Philips herself was an ardent Royalist. Her husband was “a supporter of parliament, prominent in Welsh politics during the Commonwealth and protectorate” (Chernaik). The marriage may have saved them both—James protecting Katherine during the 1640s and 50s, and Katherine in turn vouching for James after the Restoration. James’s survival, and his close emotional relationship to a Royalist, may also be attributed to his moderate political views, for which he had garnered a reputation (Chernaik). In fact Chernaik speculates that the name Antenor “is probably an allusion to the Trojan who tried to make peace between Greece and Troy” (Chernaik). If Philips saw her husband as a moderate peacemaker, all the easier to reconcile his views against her own, and to defend him when the political landscape suddenly shifted. In short, theirs was a collaborative marriage in a divided political age.

Two poems address the Philipses’ political situation from opposing angles: one is designed to defend James and the other to defend Philips herself. In the first, entitled “To my Antenor, March 16. 1661/2,” Philips addresses her husband in what must have been a precarious political

moment. The poem opens with a plea that Antenor “talk of graves no more,” indicating perhaps a threat to his life (Philips 2). This is a moment of despair for supporters of the Commonwealth and protectorate, and Philips acknowledges “Those whose own sword their death did give, / Afraid were or asham’d to Live” (Philips 9–10). Both fear and shame are potential drivers for suicide among Parliamentarians in the Restoration, and Philips’s inclusion of shame here may be a projection of her own political perspective. But she encourages Antenor not to succumb to these feelings: “’Tis braver much t’out-ride the storm, / Endure its rage, and shun his harm” (Philips 13–4). Philips uses the same stormy metaphor for political upheaval that Marvell often employs, an unusual way for a Royalist poet like Philips to characterize the Restoration. Philips clearly empathizes with her husband’s situation, but by encouraging her Antenor not to be swept up in the rage and shame of the political moment, she casts him as a figure who must be bolstered by herself as the wise poet. The poem both shores up James in hard times and highlights his vulnerabilities in comparison to the staid Orinda.

In the poem’s penultimate line, Philips reveals that “the Parliament have rescu’d you,” alluding to some kind of pardon that James received, perhaps at Philips’s behest. The poem ends unresolved but hopeful that the “wheel” is “turning round,” and that feelings may shift to follow Parliament’s pardon (Philips 17). Her encouragement to her husband is aphoristic: she tells him, “Woes have their Ebb as well as flood” (Philips 24). Rather than being a marriage of convenience that endures political difference as means of surviving difficult times, this poem indicates a relationship of differing opinions but mutual understanding and sympathy. However that sympathy in the poem comes at the expense of viewing Antenor as an agential individual. This is crucial in the next Antenor poem, which finds Philips having to directly defend her identity as sole author.

In “To Antenor, on a paper of mine which J. Jones threatens to publish to his prejudice,” Philips responds to the puritan Jenkin Jones, who accuses James of espousing the views in Philips’s poetry (wrongly assuming perhaps, that James was the poems’ true author) (Chernaik). In the poem’s first line Philips immediately conflates the speaker with herself, the author: “Must then my crimes become thy scandall too?” (Philips 1). Mirroring this linkage between author and speaker is the link between Orinda and Antenor, “*my* crimes” and “*thy* scandall.” Philips does not disavow the Royalist statements in her works, but she takes pains to separate James’s opinions—and his fate—from her work. The poem is, as Clarke calls it, “a text preoccupied with authorship,” and Philips’s defense of her husband’s innocence is channeled through an assertion of her own authorial energies (Clarke, Clarke, and Loxley 234). “My love and life I must confesse are thine,” she writes, acknowledging James’s role in her life, “But not my errorrs, they are only mine” (Philips 7–8). Clarke sees this assertion as a claim of authorship, and that it is, though a delicate one.<sup>73</sup> The poem is clear that the verses and their opinions should be attributed to her alone, but in characterizing this as “errorrs,” and not as poetry or verses in general, Philips leaves wide room for influence and collaboration. She acknowledges her own agency as an author without closing off the paths through which the thoughts and feelings of others have affected her work. This is a subtle statement of authorship—a willingness to take blame without claiming all of the credit.

Philips makes explicit in this poem what is implicit in the other poems. Though her persona of Orinda is willing to acknowledge the influence of other individuals she stops short of fully acknowledging her poetry as collaboratively produced. Though our modern understanding of coterie culture and manuscript circulation suggests that many of the people mentioned in the

---

<sup>73</sup>“Through such strategies [in ‘To Antenor’] Philips is able to stake a claim to the position of author: although a woman and a wife, and therefore not overly encumbered with property, the writings for which her husband is presumed to be responsible are in fact ‘only mine’” (Clarke, Clarke, and Loxley 233)

poems likely had a role in writing or editing them, the resulting voice of the poems is designed to make it seem that Philips herself is the sole controlling author. She leverages poetic conventions of friendships and romantic attachment to deflect from direct traces of collaboration. When James is under threat for having had a hand in the poems, Philips asserts her authorship all the more forcefully. In a final set of poems that address other respect artists and authors, Philips's collaborative process recedes even more despite admitting more authorial presences into the Society through her verse.

Consider her poem "To Mr. Henry Vaughan, Silurist, on his Poems," the title of which signals that these verses discuss the relation of one poet to another, with respect for the other poet's self-identification. Vaughan used the label "Silurist" as a sign of pride in his Welsh heritage, and by using the label here Philips emphasizes her respect for Vaughan's poetic point of view. As poems are an extension of friendship for Philips, this composition is a hand extended in friendship to a fellow poet, eschewing any competition in lieu of inviting Vaughan into her circle. The attributes of Vaughan's poetry that Philips values are a reflection of her own values. She praises the poetic relationship he creates between himself and his love object, called Amoret in the poetry: "First shines thy Amoret, twice crown'd by thee, / Once by thy Love, next by thy Poetry; / Where thou the best of Unions dost dispence: / Truth cloth'd in wit, and Love in innocence" (Philips 9–12). The first two lines are conventional, stating that Vaughan honors his beloved doubly, through his love and his writing. The second part is praise more unique to Philips and reflective of her own poetry. She praises Vaughan for creating a representative relationship in his poetry, that teaches others to innocently love and showcases the "best of Unions." In addition to praising Vaughan's depiction of love and friendship, Philips recognizes in Vaughan, as she does in herself, a political utility in poetry. She writes, "For each birth of thy muse to after-times / Shall expiate for all this age's crimes" (Philips 7–8). The afterlife of

Vaughan's poetry, the remembrance of his muse in later ages, will allow future readers to forgive the period for its "crimes," no doubt a reference to the war and the regicide. As a royalist voice in a republican age, Philips implies that she hopes her poetry will serve this same purpose.

Philips sees Vaughan as a natural friend because she sees herself in him, and the poem is a statement of friendship and joint poetic aims. Vaughan becomes Philips's "Moses from the Mount," who, descending with his poetic laws, might enhance her poetry (Philips 26–8). In the following lines, Philips self-deprecatingly worries that by attaching her name to Vaughan's she could "disturb" his reputation, but takes faith that she might instead benefit by the association: "Nay I have hopes that standing so near thine / 'Twill loose its drosse, and by degrees refine" (Philips 31–2). For Philips, writing the poem explicitly links the two of them. Her name "stands so near" to his, and she hopes that it will "refine" her own poetry. However by setting up a parallel between herself and Vaughan she reinforces the authorial personae of both of them. She again uses friendship to indicate a bond but separation between them, eliminating collaborative overlap and fuzziness that may have occurred in the exchange of poetic images and ideas.

Philips maneuvers in the same way with and against Margaret Cavendish, who is afforded full membership into the society of friendship. In the title and in the body of "To my Lady M. Cavendish," Philips gives Cavendish a pseudonym, Policrite, as a signal of her full admittance to Philips's circle, which might indicate an admission that Cavendish has a greater role in Philips's coterie. However, the poem does not make the relationship more abstract—it is framed as an address from Philips to Cavendish rather than one just from Orinda to Policrite. Philips is specific in her praise of Cavendish for her social rank as well as other qualities: "As well your Birth as Beauty do declare" (Philips 2). As with Vaughan, she emphasizes the importance Cavendish's writing will have for future ages: "To future times authentick fame shall bring, /

Historians shall relate and Poets sing” (Philips 7–8). Philips’s may have known something about “authentick fame,” having achieved a level of notoriety for her writing by this point in her career, but she does not portray herself in this poem as an equal to Cavendish. Like in the poem to Vaughan, Philips is conventionally self-effacing. Cavendish bestows “rays of splendour” on Philips, and “submit[s] to meet” her (Philips 10, 12). The poem reads as an entreaty to begin a relationship rather than as a reflection on a well-established friendship.

In fact the last section of the poem concerns what Philips, who has “no merits that your smile can win,” could possibly offer Cavendish as a token of friendship (Philips 19). This is a sly self-effacing gesture. For Philips of course has an answer ready: “But I can love, and love at such a pitch, / As I dare boast it will ev’n you enrich” (Philips 23–4). After downplaying her own abilities for the entire poem, Philips is willing to “boast” of her capacity for love, and for the capability of that love to “enrich” Cavendish and her writerly abilities. Philips leaves Cavendish with an unusual metaphor for feeling. “Kindness,” she writes, “is a Mine,” suggesting that the “nobler Ore” of kind treatment and loving feeling can be produced through labor to the benefit of those who produce it. Philips offers, without subtlety, to mine her own kindness—and presumably the kindness and friendship of her entire coterie—for Cavendish. Here Philips acknowledges an exchange between the friendships that surround her and her poetic abilities, but her entreaties to Cavendish are always in the first person. In her exchange with other authors, Philips forever positions herself as “the Matchless Orinda,” the nickname her burgeoning poetic fame earned her.<sup>74</sup> For insofar as Philips acknowledges or even praises the role of others in her poetry, she is careful to draw boundaries around her own authorship.

---

<sup>74</sup>This fame was likely enhanced by another collaboration with court musician Henry Lawes, who composed music that accompanied many of Philips’s lyrics when they were sung at court. Lawes’s compositions were influential accompaniments for a poet’s work, allowing them to be heard by members of the highest echelons of society. I will



Philips authorial identity is primarily as poet, but toward the end of her life she gained notoriety through another literary endeavor—a translation of Pierre Corneille’s *Pompey*. In translating *Pompey*, Philips engaged in a diachronic collaboration similar to the ones discussed in previous chapters.<sup>75</sup> Reynolds has made a connection between friendship and translation, given “the affection translators tend to feel for the texts with which they are imaginatively involved” (Reynolds 133). For Philips, whose whole career is organized around friendship, she may have felt all the more acutely the connection to Corneille through refashioning his work all the more acutely. It is equally fitting that translation was a major milestone in her career. However, it is worth contrasting the singular work of Philips’s translation with the contemporary, overtly collaborative *Pompey the Great*, a joint work of Charles Sedley, Edward Filmer, Edmund Waller, Charles Sackville, and Sidney Godolphin. While it is true that all translations have a diachronic collaborative character, the Sedley *Pompey* combines the joint work at a temporal shift with synchronic collaborative work among English translators. Again Philips takes a collaborative task but refuses to share attribution, asserting her own agency as author and furthering her reputation.

Philips embodies several of the chief attributes of collaboration in the early modern period. Her writing practices are bound to methods of manuscript circulation, in which poetry changed hands many times among members of her coterie and in the wider court circles in which she lived and worked. Her claims to authorship are always contingent and contested, and her poetry is often a negotiation of differing claims. Throughout her poetry, whether in attestations of love for Anne Owen, in defense of her husband James Philips, or in praise of other authors like Vaughan and Cavendish, Philips always cleverly disguises the collaborative origins of her work even as she

---

discuss Lawes’s role in poetic transmission in the next chapter, but suffice to say that Philips’s association with Lawes no doubt contributed to her popularity.

<sup>75</sup>See the section on Dryden’s adaptations of Shakespeare in Chapter 3, and especially the diachronic collaborations of Chapter 2, particular concerning Dryden’s translation of Virgil.

extols the value of friendship with others. This perhaps embodies the authorial character of the age, in which collaboration was common but hidden within the fame of major authors. Philips made sure she was in that group of major authors even though her verse—like almost all late-seventeenth century poetry—was the result of many overlapping voices.

## Works Cited

- Chernaik, Warren. "Philips, Katherine (1632-1664)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 2004. Web. 23 Apr. 2017.
- Clarke, Danielle, Elizabeth Clarke, and James Loxley, eds. "Unfettered Organs: The Polemical Voices of Katherine Philips." *This Double Voice: Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. 230–248. Print. Early Modern Literature in History.
- Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2010. Print.
- Masten, Jeffrey. *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.
- Matt, Susan J., and Peter N. Stearns, eds. *Doing Emotions History*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2014. Print. History of Emotions.
- Philips, Katherine. *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda*. Ed. Patrick Thomas. Stump Cross Books, 1990. Print.
- Reynolds, Matthew. *The Poetry of Translation : From Chaucer & Petrarch to Homer & Logue*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. Print.
- Scott-Baumann, Elizabeth. *Forms of Engagement: Women, Poetry and Culture 1640-1680*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.
- Stiebel, Arlene. "Not Since Sappho: The Erotic in Poems of Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn." *Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment England: Literary Representations in Historical Context*. Ed. Claude J. Summers. New York: Haworth Press, 1992. 153–72. Print. Research on Homosexuality.

# **Authorship in Aggregate: Hidden Labors** **and *Brief Lives***

I have now considered four distinct examples of relationships that impact literary forms—the antiquarian collaboration of *Poly-Olbion*, associations among poems in printed anthologies, the rivalries of Shakespeare and Dryden, and the coterie of Katherine Philips. Taken together these case studies highlight the variations in relational authorship across genres and time periods, but no selected close readings can capture the full range of early modern collaboration. In this chapter I turn to a consideration of authorship as a category and to the study of authors in aggregate. My approach here will combine the close, historicized reading done in previous chapters with digital methods for working with thousands of individuals at once. In the first part of the chapter I examine the ways in which early moderns themselves understood authors as a category by reading the biographies of authors that form a distinct section of John Aubrey’s *Brief Lives*. In the second part I extend early modern understandings of authorship through a study of authors present in *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon*, a network dataset based on biographies. In both I consider the status of the author biography—how do early modern people, and we as scholars, consider authors as individuals within large systems? how do we make sense of the work they do? I argue that Aubrey presents authorship as a series of social interactions and collaborations, and likewise the early modern social network reveals that the work of authorship is distributed into a large system of writers and non-writers alike.

We may begin by asking, “what is an author?” This is, of course, the title of Michel Foucault’s famous 1979 essay in which he describes an author-function deployed on certain individuals by larger cultural institutions, especially censorship and penalization, after any creation has taken place: a back-formation. More recently scholars have sought to expand Foucault’s definition of

authorship's institutional roots without dispensing entirely with the concept of the author. As Joseph Loewenstein writes, "The notion that individualisms are back-formations of institutionalizations is a useful etiological model, yet we need more institutional divinities in this myth of origins. The Author is a censorship-effect, and also a book-effect, a press-effect, a market-effect" (Loewenstein, *The Author's Due* 12). This list of effects describes a set of social groups and interactions; it takes the assignment of "Author" to an individual to be situated within several intersecting social and institutional roles. In some of these roles the author is directly involved, in others the author does not participate. The various labors of authorship involve many collaborators working with, for, and even against the person who first inscribed the text, sometimes long after the author's own lifetime. Treating authorship as a social function does not invite others into the category of "author" per se—to do so would be only to perpetuate the system of back-formations that has created the individual author; nor does it replace the individual author with a diffuse cultural system in which agency can never be located precisely. Instead attention to the multitudinous effects of authorship helps us to understand the ways that an author is situated within a network of social and institutional relations. That network is made up of many agents who participate in the creation of both the author and the text—the text is neither the result of individual action nor diffuse cultural forces but the slower and sometimes intimate build-up of social relations. Understanding how those social relations work and what effects they have on the texts produced by them is key.

Loewenstein's call to attend to the multiple effects of the Author is part of a larger trend in recent book history and authorship studies which answers Adrian Johns's notion that a "new historical understanding of print" will include "regard for the labors of those actually involved in printing, publishing, and reading" (Johns). Jody Greene takes up Johns's challenge, offering a history of authorship that recognizes the collaborative, decentralized early modern world of "knowledge

production” while staking out the specific and unique labors of the author with and against the other actors in these networks (Greene 5–8). My analysis here follows Greene in its unwillingness to dispense with the notion of the author as a figure of importance in the construction of texts and knowledge; to say that all texts are collaborative does not erase the crucial role that individuals play in *writing* the texts. Rather, collaboration acknowledges the range of other labors that surround composition. Feminist book historians have known and written of these forgotten labors; this is the history that Wendy Wall recounts in *The Imprint of Gender*, a project of recovery for the female authors, printers, and publishers (Wall). In a parallel project within performance studies, Natasha Korda reframes the labors of the early modern stage and challenges an easy account of the “all-male” theater by retracing the many kinds of female labor that surrounded the creation of renaissance drama, sometimes literally unearthing new evidence of women’s work in her accounts of recent theater excavations (Korda). All of these studies involve archival work. I hope to establish that recovery projects of this kind can be assisted by network analysis without suggesting that archival work should be in any way replaced by computation. I offer the methods that follow as a way of locating the figures and relationships on which such archival work should be done, and in a series of brief sketches I begin to engage in some of that work. Used responsibly and in conjunction with the care and attention that archival work often brings to the study of human relationships and with adequate understanding of the historical contexts of such relationships, social network analysis can be a powerful tool for understanding and reconstructing the social and institutional roles of the past, roles that Loewenstein identifies as part of authorship. Before I turn to a full-scale network analysis, it is worth identifying the ways in which early modern figures themselves thought about networks of authorship by examining the small worlds that John Aubrey sketches out in his late seventeenth-century posthumously-published collection, *Brief Lives*.

## 6.1 Aubrey's Authorships

Aubrey catalogs the lives of many of the authors already discussed in this dissertation, along with other notable people of the day. Though certainly incomplete—Aubrey mostly ignores early modern women as a rule—the collection provides insight into the nascent category of authorship and the ways late seventeenth-century subjects were beginning to define it. In the first place, Aubrey has a fraught relationship to his own status as biographer and author. Aubrey saw himself as a collaborator or an intermediary whose task was, as antiquary—an occupational category overrepresented in our subgroup—to coordinate the work of others.<sup>76</sup> Throughout *Brief Lives*, Aubrey expresses the help he receives in a casual tone, but is nonetheless careful to give credit for any assistance he received. He frequently refers to having heard of a biographical fact from this or that person. In a memorable section of John Selden's biography, for example, Aubrey cites a story from the Lady Cotton, widow to Sir Robert Cotton, that was told to William Dugdale who told it to Aubrey (Aubrey 400). This is more than a responsible citation practice. When Aubrey refers to having heard or learned of something, he often means that one or more members of his impressively vast and diverse social circle actively retrieved the information for him. It is no wonder that the very next sentence of Selden's biography begins "I have heard Michael Malet say..." (Aubrey 400). As an antiquary Aubrey was obsessed with collecting information and equally caught up in the networks and labors producing that information. In addition to the constant references to the people who had already retrieved information for the *Lives* are the many reminders that Aubrey leaves for himself to request information from others. Everywhere in the margins of *Brief Lives* is the word "quaere"—ask, search, or query—followed by the name of a person. Aubrey was reminding himself to reach out to others for more information. But those notes survive when he sends the manuscript to his collaborator and

---

<sup>76</sup>"Aubrey invariably called himself an 'antiquary', implying that his intellectual contribution was not merely that of a writer, but of one through whose interventions manuscripts were discovered, preserved, and printed, books reprinted, sketches made, and sketches engraved" (Aubrey, lxxxv-lxxxvi).

mentor Anthony Wood for future publication (which of course never occurred while Aubrey or Wood were living). More than just notes to himself, Aubrey seems happy leaving these notes in a “final draft” for his readers, as if they were suggestions for the reader to attend directly to the persons who have details on a particular story or claim. Besides being a catalog of many eminences in early modern England, Aubrey’s text is also a compendium of lesser-known people, many of them not authors themselves, who were acquaintances with or experts on those famous figures. Aubrey lets his text advance and publish, though in manuscript,<sup>77</sup> the extent of his personal network, full of laborers that otherwise the text might conceal from view, and the labor performed by these people is a crucial part of the literary production.

In his letter that begins *Brief Lives*, Aubrey promises Wood “the naked and plaine trueth,” while at the same time acknowledging the shortcomings of “printed histories,” which are either too exacting to be plain or too obscure to be true (Aubrey 38). While this could be read as a way of bolstering the credibility of his own biographies by criticizing the work of his predecessors, Aubrey instead seems to implicitly understand that his own writing will not be able to achieve what Aubrey might have regarded as “truth itself.” After a long, lurid metaphor on the nudity of his accounts, he implores Wood to edit his work, to “sowe-on some figge-leaves” (Aubrey 38). Aubrey recognizes that the stories need artificiality, even if he is a bit coy over whether or not his own biases have come into his accounts. It is worth considering how early modern writing in general and Aubrey’s biographical sketches in particular implicitly acknowledge the kind of shared labor that is detectable within *Six Degrees*. Early modern authors are certainly invested in self-fashioning, but everywhere within their constructions of selfhood are indications of the wider range of labors that went into the work. Early modern authors are—sometimes

---

<sup>77</sup>For more on the importance of manuscript publication, see Love.



consciously, sometimes unconsciously—giving hints and acknowledgement of the wider networks of knowledge production.

Before turning more fully to *Brief Lives*, it is worth reviewing the long tradition of early modern authors acknowledging the work of collaborators. Many of these acknowledgments are paratextual and can be read between the lines of dedications, printers' notes, and encomia.<sup>78</sup>

Dryden's long diatribes for and against collaborators in his dedications and introductory text are perhaps the most famous example. He often uses dedications as an extension of his authorial ego, flattering patrons like Mulgrave and Rochester in one moment, swiping at rivals like Shadwell the next, and bolstering the careers of friends and proteges like Etheredge and Congreve. He acknowledges laborers as well as those who provided capital, or, as with potential patrons, those who could prospectively provide capital.

Authors not only acknowledged collaborators, but the authors themselves were sometimes not the central figures in a network of labor creating and distributing a text. But unlike Dryden, who had a successful print career and lots of space on the page to publicly thank friends and attack enemies, Katherine Philips, whose works were not published in her lifetime, had to acknowledge collaborators in her poetry itself. In "To Antenor, on a paper of mine which J. Jones threatens to publish to his prejudice," Philips deflects the blame for her anti-Puritan verses that might have fallen on her Republican husband James by taking full credit for the "errours" of her poetry while acknowledging the "love and life" that belong to her husband (Philips). Philips exonerates her husband but leaves room for his role in her writing process, and James would go on to play a crucial role in the Philips canon, serving as the main editor of the authorized collection of Philips's poems after her death. Writers who were not poets or playwrights also write similar

---

<sup>78</sup>The subject of the networks evident in paratext needs longer treatment, and I take up a computational approach to these networks in an upcoming essay and digital project.

acknowledgements. In a diary entry dated 12 May 1656, John Evelyn records, “Was published my”Essay on Lucretius,” with innumerable errata by the negligence of Mr. Triplet, who undertook the correction of the press in my absence.” Despite his clear unhappiness with the job Triplet did, Evelyn nonetheless acknowledges that he would allow others to stand in for him during the printing process, overseeing his work and looking out for errors. Like Boyle’s cursory acknowledgement of his sister’s very active role in his scientific writing, little asides about the roles of these laborers can be found throughout early modern writing.

The best example of this acknowledgement of labor might be in the works of Ben Jonson, ironically the person identified most frequently by scholars as the origin point of self-fashioned authorship.<sup>79</sup> In the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson stages a conversation between a Stage-Keeper, Book-Holder, and Scrivener on the role and rights of the author in relation to his own work. They imagine themselves in a conversation with Jonson, or rather Jonson portrays them as in a conversation with himself, thereby acknowledging in these fictional laborers his joint work with their real-world counterparts. The Stage-keeper says, “But these master poets, they will ha’ their own absurd courses; they will be informed of nothing! He has, sir-reverence, kicked me three or four times about the tiring house, I thank him, for but offering to put in with my experience. I’ll be judged by you gentlemen, now, but for one conceit of mine!” (Jonson, Induction.26-31). The Stage-keeper notes that Jonson and other “master poets” mistreat him and his expertise. They will not listen to him, as they “will be informed of nothing,” and Jonson (or a fictionalized version of Jonson) even went so far as to beat him for “offering to put in with my experience.” Nonetheless Jonson creates the voice of the Stage-keeper in order that he be heard and asserts himself at this moment, intervening directly with the audiences with his ideas for the play. The Book-holder then appears to chastise the interposition of stage practices on the

---

<sup>79</sup>See Loewenstein’s companion book to *The Author’s Due: Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship*.

author's complete work, which was been "writ... just to his [the Author's] meridian" (Jonson, Induction.57). However, that the Book-holder sees it as his role to defend the work of the author is itself an acknowledgment of his own work as prompter, making sure the actors are hewing as closely as possible to the script. Jonson perhaps unwittingly here points out his reliance on the Book-holder as stand-in and defender of the play's written text. Finally the Scrivener delivers a long speech in mock-legalese that enumerates the rights of the author and attempts to rein in the audience and its way of hearing and interpreting the play they are about to see. Jonson's attempt to control individual (Stage-keeper, Book-holder) and collective (audience, acting company) laborers as they interpret and reinterpret his work acknowledges the participatory environment in which the play is situated. Jonson attempts to wring humor out of these collaborations and seems to poke fun at his own well-known need to exert control at every moment. But in the Induction he draws attention to the many kinds of work that are complementary to his own role as the author. Though he may have been ultimately successful in containing and eclipsing these other labors, he leaves the evidence of their work right up front for readers to see. While Jonson's authorial control within a collaborative play-making environment are well-documented, other kinds of labor in other genres remain more hidden from view. Aubrey exemplifies much of this extra authorial work, and though Jonson bolsters his own authorship by acknowledging and containing the work of others, Aubrey does so with a wide range of other writers including himself.

In *Brief Lives*, Aubrey engaged in these same authorship-bestowing activities, extolling the lives and reputations of authors and other public figures. As a biographer Aubrey was one of the first in a long line of critics to begin the work of creating the authorial back-formations we know today. For doing so we may call him a commentator, but we might also call him a collaborator, for without him certain works and reputations might never have reached us. In her new edition to

*Brief Lives*, Bennett leaves intact—as much as possible—Aubrey’s original organizing scheme for the biographies (Aubrey, cxliii). This order includes a section on famous poets, not always preserved as a distinct group in older editions of the text.<sup>80</sup> However Aubrey’s ordering of the entries suggests he thinks of poets and playwrights as a distinct category, and he follows that section with a group of historians including Camden and Selden. While the order of the sections themselves is likely of less significance than the individual entries having been put into groups, I want to suggest that having antiquarians follow poets is a gesture toward the similarity among different kinds of authorial activity, at least as distinct from the entries for other political and public figures elsewhere in the manuscript. This is especially significant because, were it not for affording his own biographical entry a special place in the manuscript at the start of Volume II, this category of antiquarian and historical authors is likely where Aubrey would have placed himself.<sup>81</sup> He describes himself as a burgeoning antiquarian even as a young man: “My head was alwaies working, never idle. and even travelling (which from 1649 till 1670, was never off my horse back) did gleane some observations, of which I have a collection in folio of 2 quires of paper... some whereof are to be valued” (Aubrey 437). Aubrey sees himself as a thinker and a traveler, but those qualities and habits manifest themselves in his writing, which he desires to be valued and preserved.<sup>82</sup> But regardless of whether Aubrey sought to put different kinds of authorship in adjoining sections, he certainly saw it as his purview to record and extoll the lives of authors.

---

<sup>80</sup>Due to the way select entries from *Brief Lives* are often anthologized, particularly in the Norton, many students and scholars have read the entries on Jonson, Shakespeare, Milton, etc. without realizing they constituted a distinct section in Aubrey’s original.

<sup>81</sup>It is worth noting that the section on antiquarians concludes Volume I, and Aubrey’s autobiography begins Volume II.

<sup>82</sup>And it is all the more ironic that this assertion comes in Volume II, which was all but destroyed by Anthony Wood (Aubrey).

Though Aubrey obviously thought highly of the authors he chose to include in the manuscript, he saw them as living people with interests, relationships, and flaws—far from the staid accounts of the lives of authors that would be taken up by Samuel Johnson and later by nineteenth century bardolators who cataloged the biographies of early modern poets. Aubrey’s accounts take poetic work seriously while everywhere making connections out to other far-flung parts of early modern society, showing that authors did not exist in a vacuum and had many similarities to other artists and professionals. I already mentioned the associations and collaborations listed in Selden’s biography, but that same entry also includes a charming account of the revered historian playing the violin as a young man during a social event (Aubrey 400). Aubrey’s accounts of literary authors’ lives include the same kinds of details. He includes information about Andrew Marvell’s drinking (Aubrey 344), about John Denham’s gambling habit that caused him to be “rooked by Gamesters” (Aubrey 348), about an instance in Edmund Waller’s young adulthood when “he grew (upon I know not what occasion) mad” (Aubrey 373), and about Samuel Butler’s gout (Aubrey 388). Rather than tangential to the content of the entries, these more personal, perhaps sensational anecdotes are often the focus of a particular poet’s life story. Authorship as constructed by Aubrey is not scrubbed of inconvenient or unsavory information. In fact, the entries have the feel of a tell-all even as they reflect on writerly prowess. Aubrey’s lack of withholding also manifests in how often he discusses the other occupations and collaborations of authors.

In Aubrey’s work, authors are frequently engaged in activities other than writing. John Denham was “Surveyor of his [Majesties] buildings” (Aubrey 349), Abraham Cowley was “Secretarie to the Earle of St Albans” (Aubrey 380), and Samuel Butler “painted well: and made it (sometime) his profession” (Aubrey 387). Again it is not surprising that these authors had other occupations and interests, but that Aubrey memorializes it alongside their literary achievements. Likewise

Aubrey's authors are everywhere commenting on one another's work and working together. He famously includes Jonson's commentary in his Shakespeare entry (Aubrey 366), and in a memorable passage he uses Denham's entry to record a swipe at George Wither: "John Denham went to the King and desired his Majestie not to hang him [Wither], for that whilest George Withers lived, he should not be the worst Poet in England" (Aubrey 349). As an extension of his own collaborative practice, Aubrey includes this commentary—whether or not any of it is accurate, and most of it is not—everywhere in his accounts of authors, almost as a reminder of the authors' existence within a turbulent social environment. Aubrey imagines everything as an ongoing conversation.

This is nowhere more evident than in his biography of Francis Beaumont. The Beaumont entry is—perhaps unsurprisingly—largely a reflection on the playwright's well-known close relationship and collaboration with John Fletcher. But rather than devote separate entries to each author, Aubrey seems to have chosen to treat them as a single subject. He does not include an entry for Fletcher, though some crossed out information in Volume III suggests he may have once planned to. Instead Aubrey turns from a cursory acknowledgement of Beaumont's parentage to the "wonderfull consimilitude of phansey" between him and Fletcher, and notes that Beaumont's "maine businesse was to correct the superoverflowings of Mr Fletchers witt" (Aubrey 393). That Beaumont's entry should be overtaken with discussion of Fletcher would not be as striking were Fletcher given a longer, separate entry of his own. Beaumont seems to recede in his own biography in the face of Fletcher and other figures. Aubrey discusses the home Fletcher and Beaumont shared, an "admirable" elegy Fletcher wrote that is "printed with verses before Sir Thomas Overburies characters, Fletcher's burial place which was shared with Isaac Casaubon, and Fletcher's "very good prefatory letter" to Chaucer's works (Aubrey 393). Aubrey even includes in Beaumont's entry a note that he sent concerning Fletcher's obituary, which he

had long sought, to Wood (Aubrey 393). Beaumont becomes almost an afterthought to his own life, so situated does Aubrey place him within his networks.

While at first glance biographical entries of this kind may seem to glorify individuals over groups, in Aubrey we find an investment in the networked labors of authors and those adjacent to them. A vision of authorship that follows from Aubrey should respect the intertwined personal narratives that he draws out of his factoids and anecdotes about a given author's many relationships. While other accounts of authorship may have strayed from this model, using the ODNB's biographies to reconstruct the early modern social network that Aubrey, too, accounted for, we can build a fuller picture of the world Aubrey so painstakingly tried to set down in *Brief Lives*.

## **6.2 Authorship in the Network**

Over the past two decades, early modern literary studies have begun to grapple with large-scale textual data, primarily from Early English Books Online and its subsequent machine-readable encoding initiative, the Text Creation Partnership. EEBO-TCP allows the analysis of tens of thousands of texts at once, expanding the possibilities for scholars interested in long-term developments in the print and literary record to explore and compare large quantities of text over a long historical arc. In addition scholars have begun to turn their attention to social data as an important avenue for so-called big data scholarship. Here historians and sociologists have led the way, demonstrating the importance of social network analysis for understanding historical relationships, groups, and professions. The work of early modern scholars such as Ruth and Sebastian Ahnert and Scott Weingart shows the impact that network analysis concepts such as brokerage—the identification of intermediaries between communities—can have on historical understanding of such disparate subjects as sixteenth-century martyrdom and seventeenth-century science (Ahnert and Ahnert; Heuvel et al.). In literary studies, many early modern

network analysis projects have been drawn from the textual data available through EEBO-TCP and its metadata cousins like the English Short Title Catalogue. Michael Gavin, Blaine Greteman, and Douglas Duhaime have all used networks based on textual data to explore the sociality of the print record.<sup>83</sup> However literature scholars have been slower to think about how scholarly knowledge of social relationships, mapped and analyzed at scale, might improve our understanding of foundational literary concepts such as authorship and biography.

One early modern network project, a joint venture of literature scholars and historians, has, since 2010, endeavoured to make scholarly knowledge of historical social relationships widely available. The data at *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon*, inferred initially from the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and subsequently improved and supplemented through a crowdsourcing web application, attempts to convert implicit historical knowledge of sociality—the sense of who knew whom—into a single source of social data available to the public (Warren et al.). This essay will show how this dataset, which relies on a wider swath of historical and literary knowledge than networks based on letters or even on EEBO, can be used to answer important questions for literature scholars. Specifically I ask how network metrics might identify the social role of authors and how these measurable social functions allow us to see the ways in which social relations inflect literary texts. I examine a set of figures who were “discovered” by this technique for the ways in which they materially contributed to literary production, though they themselves were not authors. Taking the various kinds of labor and the spectrum of personal and professional relationships that create texts into account can help literature scholars to reconsider the place of the individual author within a system of literary work, and it raises questions about the way we write and think about the biographies of authors. Because it is inferred from biographies of historical figures, the *Six Degrees* data is in a position to answer

---

<sup>83</sup>See Gavin, Greteman, and Duhaime.



these questions. I want to draw a parallel between a quantitative network analysis approach and the ways in which early modern authorship was constructed in its first forms. Namely, that historical social relations—and the hidden labor therein—can help to plot the distance between the individual author and early modern culture.

*Six Degrees* is a database of social and institutional roles, and thanks to the “historical significance” field provided by the *ODNB*,<sup>84</sup> I was able to identify individuals who were labeled as authors by the group of nineteenth and twentieth century scholars who composed the biographies. I did so by looking for four words in this data field: author (itself used sparingly), poet, playwright, and writer (often, in my reading of these historical significances, used as a synonym for author). This is not a perfect category to start with, nor do we want it to be. Authorship itself, as imposed on individuals by the categorization system of language, is an imperfect category. But by choosing the narrowest possible selection of people who have been labeled this way, is it possible to extrapolate to a larger group of people who share the same profile? Do authors, narrowly defined, work in similar ways to one another? And which other people work in ways similar to authors?

Networks describe systems. Social networks treat individuals as discrete but always situated within larger fields of interaction. These interactions can be measured and compared, and with sufficient information, we can learn more about an individual’s immediate social reach, her role within communities, and her place in the wider culture.<sup>85</sup> Using standard network analysis

---

<sup>84</sup>Some “historical significance” fields were created by *Six Degrees* users when adding new people to the data.

<sup>85</sup>Network analysis finds itself in a pivotal position in relation to current debates within digital humanities. While this article was being written, news broke of the improper and malicious handling of personal data by Cambridge Analytica—and perhaps more importantly of Facebook’s failure to protect such data from those who would violate personal privacy in an attempt to manipulate individuals for commercial or political reasons. This naive approach to social media and personal data in our current political and social moment has made many more people aware of the sometimes destructive power of digital techniques, including network analysis. In these moments the *humanities* in digital humanities is needed more than ever, both to consider the human costs of such approaches in the hands of bad actors and to find ways to build systems and techniques that take concerns about society, politics, and identity

techniques, I determined a set of metrics for each individual in the *Six Degrees* network. Some important measures include: *degree*, the number of people to whom an individual is linked, *subgraph centrality*, the sum of all paths leading out from an individual that return back to that individual, and the *average degree* of all of a person's immediate *neighbors*.

It is common to take these metrics and compare one or two of them to each other across the entire set of individuals in the network, e.g. which people have higher betweenness centrality relative to their degree? However, my question about authorship is about a person's *social role*, a concept in social network analysis that has been in circulation among network scientists and sociologists since at least the early 1980s. The idea of individuals occupying distinct social roles is of course a much older idea than that, but in the late twentieth-century social science researchers and network analysts conceived social role as the structural place of an individual node within a larger network of social interaction. In those early days, social role was determined by the concepts of structural and regular equivalence, which examine the similarity of network structures around individuals. In a directed network—one in which not all relationships are reciprocated—a structurally equivalent individual would have the same number and kind of connections. So two nodes that have the same in-degree (the amount of relationships for which a node is the object) and out-degree (the number of relationships for which a node is the subject) would be said to be structurally equivalent because they occupy the same structural place within the graph. As an extension of this principle, two individuals have regular equivalence when they

---

into account. This has implications in humanities inquiry as well as in the aforementioned contemporary social context. For example, in literary studies, large textual corpora without historical and social metadata make it too easy to ignore important cultural factors. Katherine Bode has recently and forcefully argued that current methods of computationally “distant” reading focus on texts absent their context and therefore follow traditional models of close reading (Bode). Bode asks DH scholars to consider digital approaches to text that account for historical and cultural context. Network analysis, by dealing with social relations, provides an alternative to methods that would reinscribe close reading by focusing solely on textual evidence. While acknowledging that the history of quantitative network analysis has included detrimental imperialist and capitalist acts, like the aforementioned Facebook breach, social networks are nonetheless positioned to help us refocus digital literary studies around social and cultural questions. That is to say, network analysis is a powerful tool for degrading and destroying large and small societies precisely because it is attuned to the power of social relations.

are connected to other nodes that are similar by some measure—usually structural equivalence. So two neighbors of two individuals that are structurally equivalent would be regularly equivalent. Regular equivalence became an early standard for social role because it extended the principles of structural equivalence out into the network without being as strict. A social network is likely to have few nodes that are perfectly structurally equivalent—virtually no two people have precisely the same social network measures—, but many sets of regularly equivalent nodes. Over time the techniques for measuring networks have become more complex and exact, but social role has become less of a concern to the physicists and social scientists developing new network techniques. Their interests have drifted toward measures of overall or global network structures and away from individual-level measures, partially as a result of the large, unimodal, undirected networks, such as communication networks, used in these studies. In the humanities, networks are often at a small or medium scale, and sometimes include two or more kinds of nodes (making them bipartite or multipartite). The nature of the data as well as the questions humanities scholars are asking of their networks has renewed interest in node-level metrics and in concepts like equivalence.<sup>86</sup> How can we assess an individual's role or reach in a network? How are certain individuals structurally related to one another within a social world?

Regular equivalence was in use before many of the ways we now measure node importance or network structure existed. Because of this, my method in this study uses more modern statistical methodology to leverage these newer measures. I use a number of different measures on the same node—the number of connections it has, the number of authors to which it is connected, the number of connections its neighbors have, the number of closed loops of which it is part,

---

<sup>86</sup>The work of Ahnert and Ahnert is a prime example of how node-level metrics can be leveraged to answer humanities questions about individuals.

etc.—to build a “profile” for that node, or in this case, for that person.<sup>87</sup> Clustering methods are one way of analyzing the similarities and differences of all these profiles to characterize the different groups in our existing set of people.<sup>88</sup> We can also use classification methods like logistic regression, the one used in this study, to assign the profile from a new person *not previously seen* into the most likely group.<sup>89</sup>

With this in mind, we can turn to the first of two research questions—when measuring by this set of features, do the “authors” from *Six Degrees* cohere as a category? Simply put: no. When using computational techniques, one should not be afraid when the answer to a research question is no. In this case, the “no” comports with a simple fact that any early modern scholar could tell you: authors in the period behave socially in very different ways from one another and across changing social circumstances. On the one hand you have Thomas Heywood, boasting about his collaborative output—on the other, the stereotype of the solitary and cantankerous John Milton. I used some standard unsupervised clustering techniques, including K-means clustering and

---

<sup>87</sup>In this section I benefitted immensely from the technical expertise of colleagues at both Carnegie Mellon University and Washington University in St. Louis. Kayla Frisoli of CMU, in particular, provided crucial assistance in refining the models used in this essay and sharpening my own understanding of these techniques. Thanks also to Rebecca Nugent, Douglas Knox, Steven Pentecost, and Daniel Evans for their help.

<sup>88</sup>For example, many clustering methods use simple euclidean distance, the distance between two points from the Pythagorean theorem that you learned in high school geometry.

<sup>89</sup>My method in this project imagines social role as a vector of the node-level metrics described above and uses machine learning techniques to predict based on these vectors. I chose to use machine learning over a more traditional technique like regular equivalence for several reasons. In the first place, regular equivalence was popular at a time in quantitative network analysis when many of the current node-level metrics had not yet been developed. We now have a wider array of techniques for understanding individual nodes, and multivariate statistical methods allow those metrics to be combined and used together. Most classification techniques take a set, or array, of attributes that describe specific data points, or samples. Think of the array of attributes, called *features*, as a kind of profile of a particular object or sample. These attributes are often numerical values and can be weighted differently in different models. Given a set of features, an unsupervised clustering method can separate samples into groups based on their similarity. In supervised classification a target value is already known, i.e. we can train the algorithm how to categorize by giving it examples of known categories for some subset of the samples. The final algorithm will tell us what features play an important role in separating groups and can be used to classify the remaining samples according to their own “profiles” of features. In this project, I use network metrics as features in my model, with individual nodes as samples. The individual people are what I am attempting to classify (as being author-like or not author-like), using the network metrics as a structural “profile” for how that person operates within the social world.

hierarchical clustering, to separate nodes into groups based on this set of features. But none of these techniques yielded clusters where a majority of authors could be found all in one group.<sup>90</sup>

Regardless of the method of *unsupervised* clustering, authors were evenly distributed among the various clusters. But early modern scholars would not expect authors to behave “alike” socially—whatever that may mean—especially since authorship is largely a post-hoc collection of social and institutional forces. Instead we want to ask which people are likely to be labeled as authors based on some comparison of their social activity. There are supervised statistical machine learning approaches designed for this kind of question. As mentioned previously, we first train a model with data that has already been labeled with the groups we are looking for (in this case, whether or not someone is an author). The group of labeled authors need not be cohesive to begin with—the model works backward, assembling the combinations of features that fit the category rather than categories that fit the features.

A supervised, machine learning approach uses the same data to answer the second research question, to find people who share a network profile—a proxy for social activity—with authors and who may have participated in literary production. The profile of network features becomes *training data* for a simple model using logistic regression. Logistic regression is a way of training a model to predict the answer to a yes or no question (or two categories) about any new data that it receives—a binary classifier.<sup>91</sup> You train the model by giving it a sufficient number

---

<sup>90</sup>Of course, there are other ways of clustering that would yield helpful results. It is possible to cluster just the group of labeled authors, for example, to determine some of the differences between authors that I mentioned above. With those groups determined, it may be possible to look for distinct subgroups of author-like people. This approach, as well as kinds of supervised learning other than logistic regression, are part of larger quantitative project currently underway.

<sup>91</sup>Logistic regression is a comparatively old technique in supervised classification, an extrapolation of linear regression, a method for estimating correlation familiar to most introductory statistics students. While it is true that there are now versions of logistic regression that will classify into more than two groups, the more traditional version of the method is used here. Since my purpose was to determine whether a person did or did not fit the profile of an author, logistic regression was the ideal tool, simple and direct. Given its easily interpretable coefficients, it was also attractive over other more complex machine learning methods, like LSTM, long short-term memory, or

of labeled network profiles. For example, you give the model Margaret Cavendish's full profile of network features and tell it, "This is the kind of author we're looking for." You also give it Richard Cromwell's profile and tell the model, "Here's an example of someone who's not an author."<sup>92</sup> If we give the model hundreds of examples, logistic regression learns how to recognize when a profile fits that of an author and when it does not. It can receive a new profile, say for Thomas Hobbes,<sup>93</sup> and predict whether or not he was an author based on his social data. Once my model was trained on the full group of authors and an equally-size group of non-authors, I used it to predict whether or not the remaining people in *Six Degrees* were author-like. The result was a list of 325 people, out of more than 5000, who had not been labeled as authors by the ODNB but who, according to their feature set or profile, were given a greater than 90% chance of having social roles similar to authors.

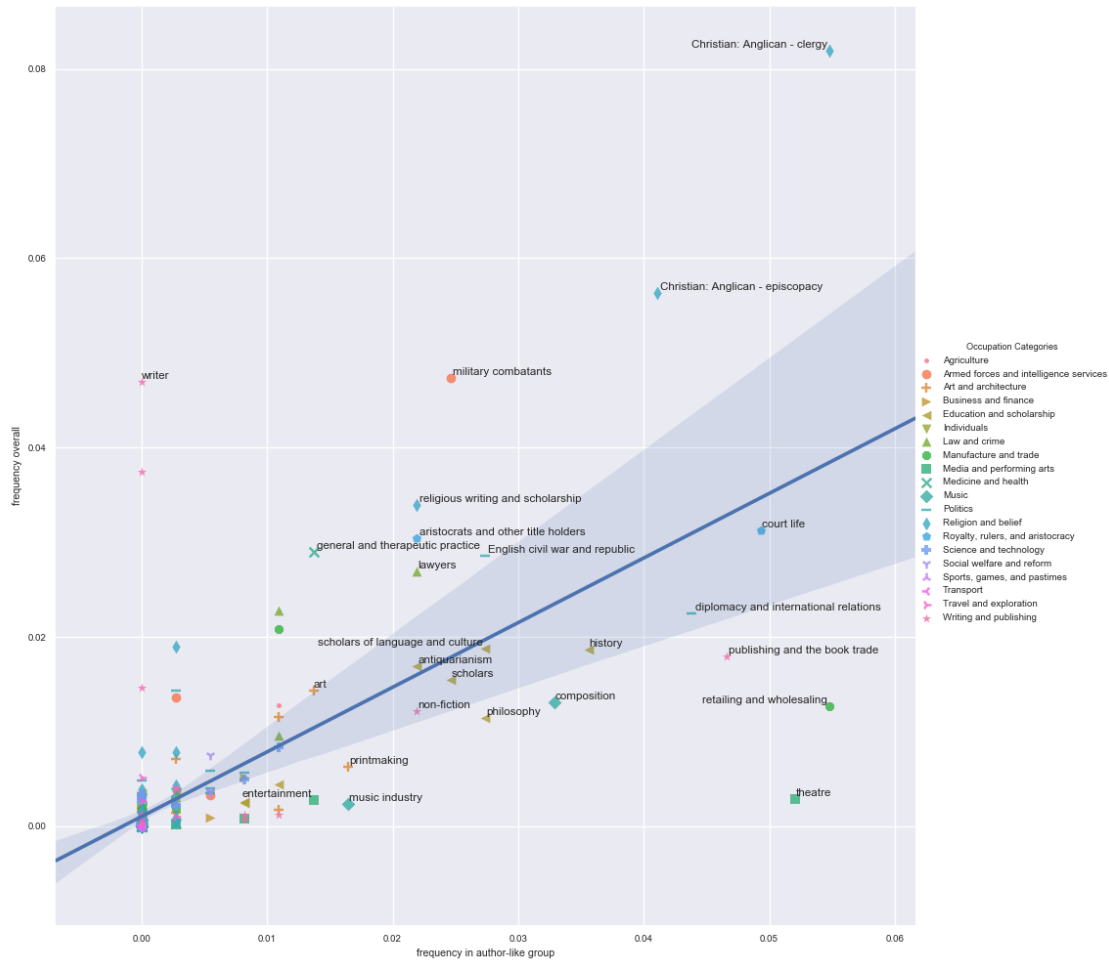
But before turning to specific examples, how might one characterize in general the people who occupy a role similar to that of authors? There are several ways to answer that question. Returning to the original dataset, I can show the distribution of occupations in the full dataset, taken from the historical significance field of *Six Degrees*, against the distribution of occupations among the 125 people which the machine learning process surfaced as author-like. These relative distributions are best viewed according to the ODNB's categories and subcategories:

---

RNN, recurrent neural nets. These newer techniques may sound more appealing but are more akin to "black box" algorithms where the details and interpretability of the results are less transparent. Logistic regression uses a well-known estimation process, and I chose it knowing that it would be apparent to me how the data was being used in the classification process. I could also more easily spot-check and interpret the models. To train my logistic regression model, I took the labeled group of authors and an equally-sized group of random non-authors with all their network data as my training set.

<sup>92</sup>Logistic regression, and binary classifiers in general, are also commonly used to sort into two groups. In this case, Group A is authors while Group B is anyone who is not an author.

<sup>93</sup>Hobbes, who is listed only as a "philosopher" by the ODNB, has a rather large degree of 130 and has direct links to 22 authors. Given these factors and his other network metric, the model gives him a ~94% of being author-like—an assumption which, as we know, is correct.



**Figure 9. Relative Distributions of Occupations**

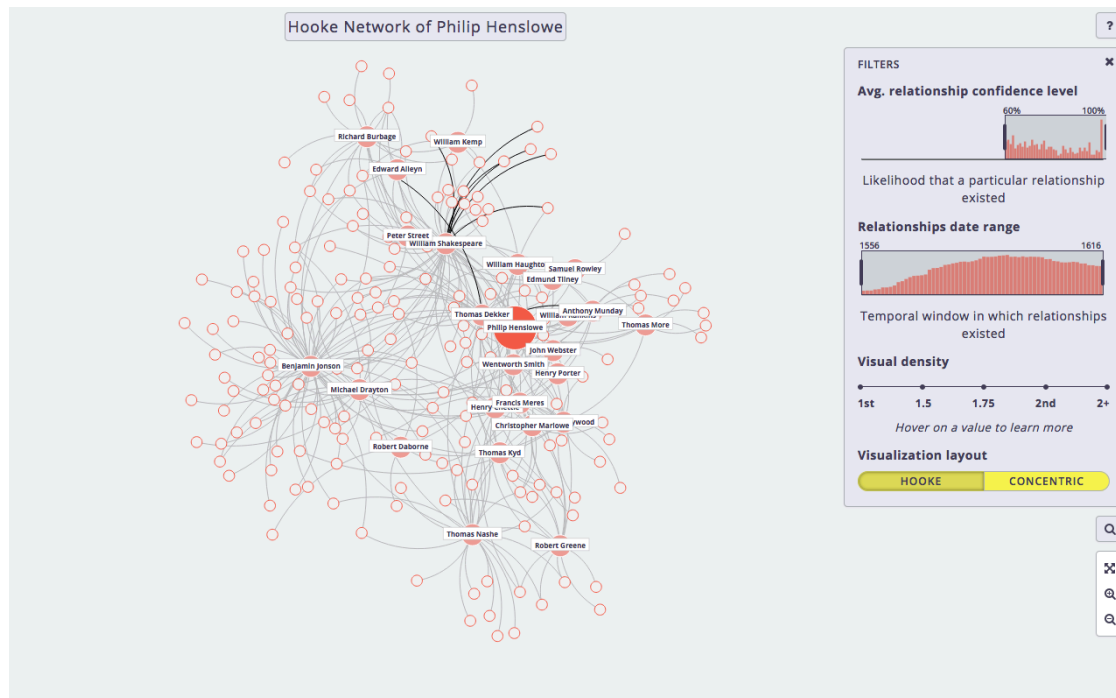
We can detect some patterns by comparing the frequency of the discovered group to the frequency of occupation categories overall. Some occupations are very frequent in the overall data but not frequent in this subset. That will make them appear in the top left of the graph above the trendline, high on the y-axis (the overall frequency) and low on the x-axis (the subset frequency).<sup>94</sup> Other occupations are right at or near the trendline, appearing with equal frequency in both groups. A final set of occupations appears in the bottom right of the graph, below the trendline. These are the occupations that appear relatively frequently in the subset but

<sup>94</sup>Readers will likely be drawn to the point farthest to the top-left of the graph, labeled “writer.” Since there were very few writers in the test data (almost all of them were used to train the model), “writer” does not register at all in the author-like group and so is a 0 on the x-axis. It is otherwise prevalent in the full SDFB group, and so is very high on the y-axis, putting it prominently in the graph’s top-left.

infrequently in the overall data. We might say that these are the occupations one is likely to have if one is author-like. These include theatre managers, actors, printers, stationers, historians, and antiquaries. This graph gives us a first, cursory look at the kinds of people that the algorithm found to be like authors—people involved in the theatre, other artists, and members of the book trade.

Looking at occupation trends can give a good general sense of what kinds of people possess author-like characteristics, but for a more complete picture one should investigate the lives and work of specific people that the model identified. I will spend the remainder of this essay on a few exemplary early moderns from the model's results list and the characteristics of their social networks—the theater manager and financier Philip Henslowe, the patron Lucy Russell, the scientist and letter-writer Katherine Jones, the composers William and Henry Lawes, the publisher Jacob Tonson, and the biographer and historian John Aubrey. Like most so-called “big data” projects in the humanities, the results of my machine learning model are an invitation for close inspection of historical and literary evidence. What the results of the logistic regression allow us to do is turn our attention from just the small subset of individuals labeled as authors to this additional group of collaborators and other professionals. It requires us to rethink who is central to the processes of text creation, and to reflect on the many relationships that generate text production.



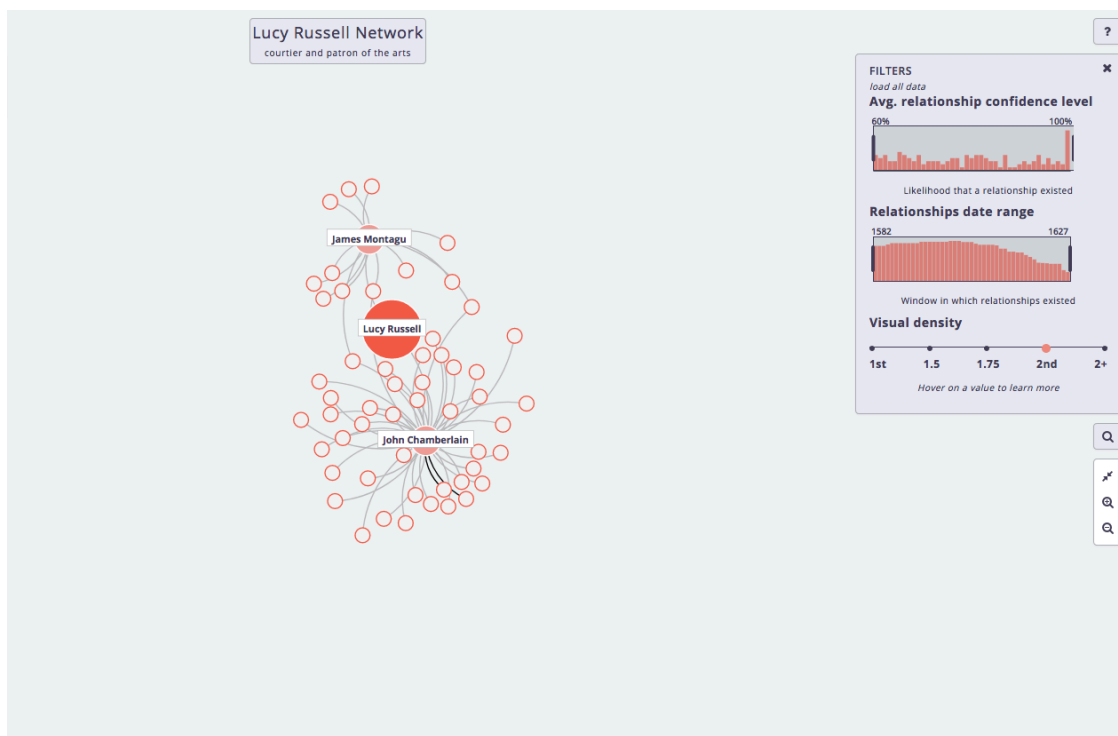


**Figure 10. Philip Henslowe Network**

More has been written about the collaborative world of early modern drama than literary collaboration in almost any other time period or genre.<sup>95</sup> We may not learn much *new* from having Philip Henslowe's name appear in this list, but it is decent evidence that the process worked. Henslowe is the best example of someone who the ODNB lists as a "theatre manager" who was adjacent to the creation of numerous works of literature, as his diary attests. We can see his reach and involvement by observing his immediate network, and note some of the patterns here because they will come up again. Henslowe is connected to people with different roles inside and outside of the early modern theatre community. He knows actors like Alleyn and Burbage as well as playwrights, including Shakespeare, of course, Jonson, and Heywood. He also knows a number of people involved in the drama community but not exclusively a part of it, which extends his reach into other kinds of textual creation, as well as authors of different genres

<sup>95</sup>To scratch the surface of this scholarship and Henslowe's place in it, see Cerasano ("Philip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn"), Cerasano ("Henslowe, Philip (c. 1555–1616), Theatre Financier"), Gurr (*The Shakespearean Stage, 1574–1642*), Gurr (*Shakespeare's Workplace*). Also refer to the new edition of Henslowe's diary: Henslowe.

and generations. Their connection to Henslowe is more than incidental. The people you know, especially if they are essential parts of a thriving industry, facilitate and expand the kinds of work you are able to do and the things you are able to achieve. Henslowe also serves as a bridge—or in network parlance, broker—between these authors and powerful censorship figures like Edmund Tilney, the Master of the Revels. Perhaps most importantly, many of these authors did not know each other, but they did know Henslowe. One of the most useful things that networks allow us to see about individuals is who stands in between groups, knitting them together into a community. Henslowe through his profession was involved at least indirectly in the creation of many plays, and crucially he was at the center of a vibrant network of authorial activity.

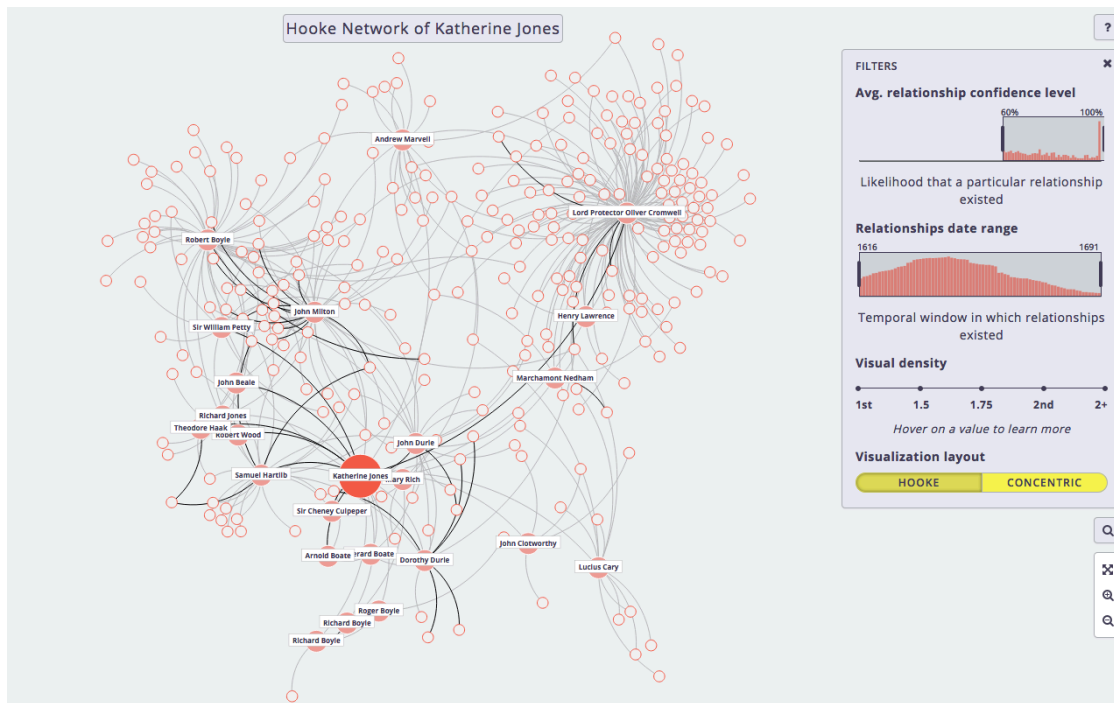


**Figure 11. Lucy, Countess of Bedford Network**

But these networks of labor are not limited to drama. Much has been written about Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, and her patronage of and association with “some of the leading poets,

playwrights, and translators of the day, notably Michael Drayton, John Florio, Samuel Daniel, John Donne, and Ben Jonson (who also eulogized her as his muse in three Epigrammes to her)” (Payne). Methodologically, it is exciting that Russell’s name has appeared in these results because, as you can see in the image above, her network on *Six Degrees* has not yet been revised to include all of these famous figures. Nonetheless, her structural place in the network results in her appearing on the list of author-like people. Despite not having the full extent of her connections in *Six Degrees* yet, running the model on her network profile reveals something about her social behavior, the life of a patron of the arts.

A significant number of patrons and benefactors were turned up by the model, and this makes sense in terms of the habits and practices of early modern patrons. Certainly many patrons provided the capital for the labor of authorship to take place—whether by paying authors directly or by providing room, board, or other preferment for them. Some patrons, including Bedford, also took an active role in the creation of the work itself, by reading and providing direct feedback on the work (Payne). Indirectly, because patronage was so central to the economic outlook for poets in the period, many authors may have written works specifically to the tastes of particular patrons, or at least kept their preferences in mind and incorporated them into literary works alongside the author’s own aims. That is to say that early modern patrons sometimes had outsize influence on the work created by their clients, and this influence took various forms, sometimes blurring the lines between capital and labor. Russell is a good example of one such important patron.



**Figure 12. Katherine Jones Network**

There are also authorial figures in fields other than poetry and drama. Early modern science, for example, constitutes another large network of writers and their collaborators. The historical significance field for Katherine Jones, nee Boyle, lists her as “noblewoman associated with the Hartlib circle,” a perfect example of the way loose concepts like “association” bely greater collaboration and agency. Here is how Sarah Hutton describes her in the ODNB article: “Apart from her letters Lady Ranelagh left no writings from which may accurately be gauged the depth of her learning or the scope of her interests. It is, however, clear from her contacts, and from other people’s appraisal of her, that she was the leading woman intellectual of her generation, actively involved in contemporary politics, and deeply interested in educational, ethical, religious, and scientific matters” (Hutton). As a sibling and collaborator to Robert Boyle, a correspondent and member of the Hartlib circle, and an employer of John Milton, Jones’s

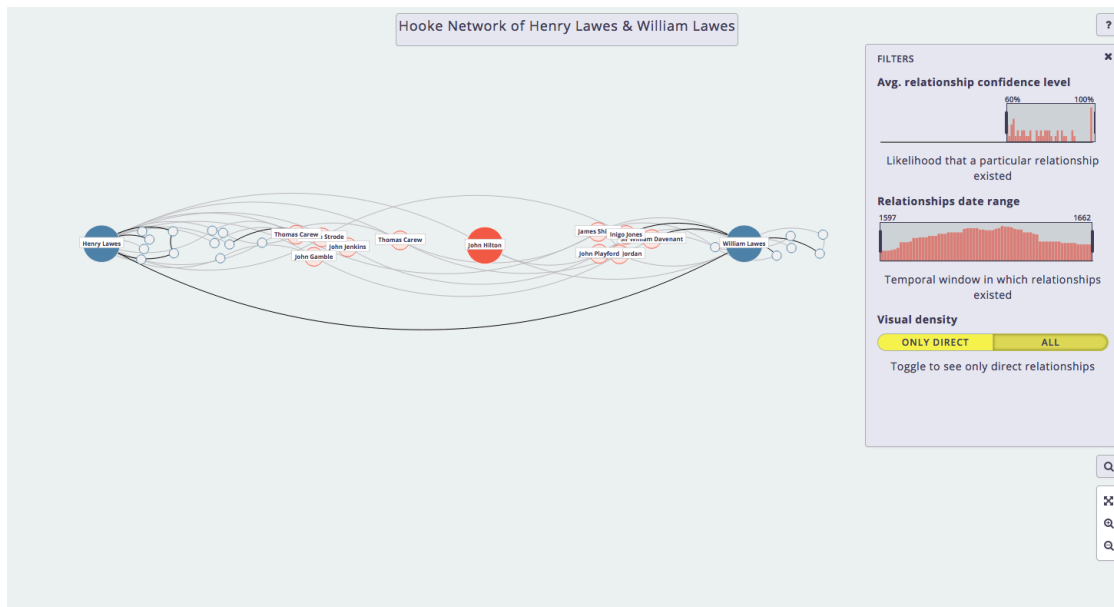
influence was felt widely in the scientific and literary communities of the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>96</sup>

I keep returning to Hutton's phrase, "It is clear from her contacts." That is after all precisely what the model intends to do, to recover agency that is clear once we examine the networks of contacts around an individual. Even in the case of someone as well-known and respected as Jones was in her own time, she is labeled as an associate, a patron, or a supportive figure rather than an author or scientist.<sup>97</sup> This too often happens to women in literary history, and by changing our perspective on the social role of authors we might take steps to remedy this subtle but damaging mislabeling.

---

<sup>96</sup>In his recent article on the networks of the Hartlib circle, Evan Bourke argues convincingly for Katherine Jones's centrality to the so-called Hartlib network and calls for a reorganization of early scientific correspondence with Jones and other women at the center (Bourke). Bourke has also been a part of the RECIRC project for the Reception and Circulation of Early Modern Women Writing at the National University of Ireland, Galway, led by Marie-Louise Coolahan. This network project is helping to uncover the circulation of women's authorial work through the collection of new data and connections on the print and manuscript reception of women's writing, and there are many overlaps between the project's aims and my own purposes here. While the *ODNB* privileges male elites over all groups for a variety of historical and structural reasons, *Six Degrees* and projects like RECIRC have labored to reconstruct some of the gaps in the historical record by specifically targeting women's work. My analysis is able to reveal the work of so many women because it builds on the work that has already been done to surface these connections.

<sup>97</sup>I am far from the first to want to remedy these assumptions made about Jones. See Connolly.



**Figure 13. Henry and William Lawes Shared Network**

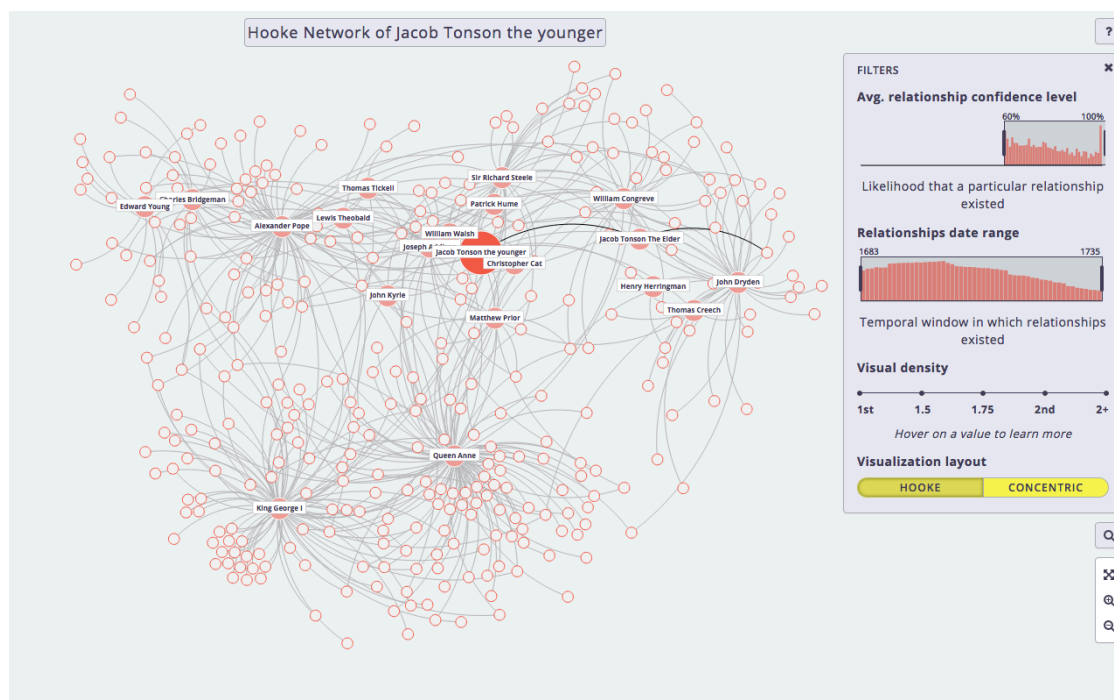
Above we looked at the professions of the various people in the discovered group. Among them were composers, who are engaged both in accompanying the work of lyric poets by setting their poems to music and creating their own works of art. This network shows the social world of two people instead of one—the shared network of Henry and William Lawes: brothers and composers. It stands to reason, first of all, that other kinds of artists might follow the same social patterns as literary writers, but among the other names in this shared network something else is at play. Some of the collaborators in this graph include Katherine Philips, John Milton, James Shirley, William Davenant, and Inigo Jones. As court composers and members of The King's Musik, much of the work of the Lawes brothers involved scoring masques and writing accompaniment to lyric poetry. They frequently collaborated in court productions involving Jones's set designs, Philips and Milton's verses, and Shirley and Davenant's plays. Literary work does not exist in isolation from other kinds of art, especially in early modern courts.<sup>98</sup> The

<sup>98</sup>Scholarly interest in the Lawes brothers, especially the older and more prominent Henry Lawes, goes back to at least the 1940s, see Evans. For a more up-to-date account of the Lawes's careers see the work of Ian Spink, Spink

inclusion of the Lawes brothers here serves as a reminder of the constant collaboration among different kinds of artists. Katherine Philips' poem "To Mr. Henry Lawes" records her indebtedness to the composer and heaps him with praise for his contribution to poetry, though this praise is within the bounds of poetic convention. He lives, the poem argues, "above the poets' praises" because the poets "fetch from thee th'eternity they give" (Philips). In Philips's depiction of him, Lawes is the one who bestows fame on poets by giving musical accompaniment to the verse and allowing it to be performed at court and elsewhere. The poem rhetorically positions Lawes as more worthy of praise than the poets themselves. Additionally Philips maintains that the number of poets that Lawes's music accompanies greatly increases his poetic power: "If then each man a little world must be, / How many worlds are copied out in thee, / Who art so richly formed, so complete / T'epitomize all that is good and great;" (Philips). Certainly this could refer just to Philips's conventional praise of an internal goodness within Lawes, but it can also refer to Lawes's ability to "epitomize" all the different poetic voices to which he adds music. In the latter reading Lawes is valuable because of the extent of his networks—the number of poets whose work he has set to music. This reverses the usual dynamic of musical accompaniment. Lawes does not merely lend his talents to individual authors, but each author increases his own "many worlds." The many worlds of Lawes and his brother were certainly well-known to mid-century poets, who often had to go through one or both Lawes brothers if they were to see their poetry reach court and the public sphere. Composers in general, and the Lawes brothers in particular, are participants in the creation of literary work as it passes through their individual creative processes. The relationship between poet and composer generates a particular kind of lyric, attuned to musical and poetic conventions. And composers are not the only professionals who serve this relational function within early modern poetry.

---

(*Henry Lawes*) and Spink ("Lawes, Henry (Bap. 1596, d. 1662), Singer and Composer"). And for the latest accounts of the circulation of music and its interaction with other arts, see Austern, Bailey, and Eubanks Winkler.



**Figure 14. Jacob Tonson Network**

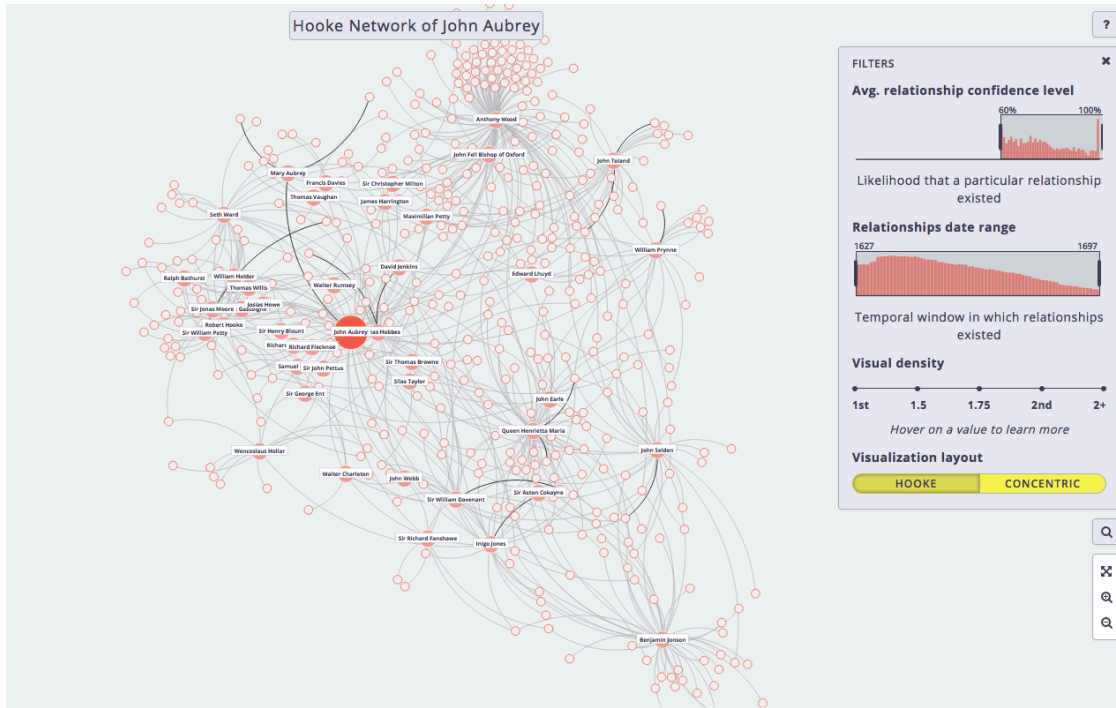
For good reason, stationers have long been an inflection point for book historians and authorship studies scholars interested in finding people other than writers involved in the creation of texts. There are plenty of network projects, like Shakeosphere and Historical Text Networks which I mentioned previously, that attempt to catalog relations in the print industry specifically. Six Degrees may not be the ideal dataset to measure the impact of printers and stationers—they are somewhat underrepresented in the data. But of the 153 printers, 115 booksellers, and other stationers and print professionals in *Six Degrees*, very few were identified by the model. However the few who were included might give us insight into specific stationers who may have taken on an author-like social role, i.e. when does a relationship between a stationer and an author go from a business transaction to a collaboration? The two Jacob Tonsons, innovative publishers who developed subscription models and built collections of poetry, were expert at turning their business partnerships with poets and playwrights like Dryden, Congreve, and Pope into lucrative collaborative enterprises. Their work brought them into contact with writers, other



publishers and printers, and the major political figures of the day.<sup>99</sup> Despite a rich tradition of work on the collaborative influence of stationers, scholarship still tends to treat them as instrumental to the creation of texts rather than integral. A reorganized account of the labors of text production might put central focus on stationers and the constellations of writers that surround them, rather than on individual writers and the stationers who published them. One affordance of the network visualization above is the ability to see the group of authors that are pulled into the orbit of one or more stationer. Looking at an individual author's network would yield a single connection to Tonson but would not give a sense of the wider network of authors connected by this one stationer. By centering the stationer both in the visualization and in our critical view of the late-seventeenth century print world, a network of authors suddenly becomes visible. And this is true not just for Tonson, but for Henslowe, Jones, Russell, and all the rest. These individuals are certainly brokers between authors—nodes that connect two or more otherwise disparate groups—but as the texts in question would not have been created without their help, it is worth examining the ways in which the relationships they cultivated with authors were key to the texts they created together.

---

<sup>99</sup>See MacKenzie, Lynch, Field, and the Introduction to Bernard.



**Figure 15. John Aubrey Network**

Close examination of these literary relationships, at scale or in particular examples, draws our attention again to how formations like authorship are historically constructed. With that in mind, I would like to return to the network of John Aubrey. His presence in this group, along with individuals like Jones, proves that the model is working because it finds figures who are clearly authors in a traditional sense of the term. However Aubrey is labeled by the ODNB as “antiquarian and biographer” rather than author or writer, consistent, according to Kate Bennett, with the way he frequently defined himself (Aubrey). Aubrey was a prolific writer, but almost all of his works, especially his now well-known biographies, were unpublished during his lifetime.

Along with the biographical work of his collaborator and mentor Anthony Wood, Aubrey’s *Brief Lives* and his other manuscripts formed an early model for what would become the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* itself. As we think of Aubrey as an author today despite how he was thought of (if at all) in his own time, we might think of him as an author of the ODNB,

and by extension of *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon*. These networks only exist as objects of study through the mediation of figures like Aubrey, whose labor in assembling brief biographical sketches forms the basis of surviving accounts of social interactions. But this mediation could also be a source of hesitation, both in literary approaches to Aubrey's *Lives* and to any analysis of the *ODNB* and *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon*: are we studying the real, historical social world—the thing itself—or only a biased account of that thing? Is our analysis hampered or predetermined by the uneven historical and historiographic attention paid to particular figures and not paid to others? And if it is hampered by a flawed historiography, how could such data possibly be used in a project of recovery? All historical projects face this problem, of course, not just digital ones. In this case, *Six Degrees* faces the problem of bias in the *ODNB* by building its network on statistical inference *derived from* co-occurrence in *ODNB* articles, rather than on the co-occurrence itself.<sup>100</sup> By operating at this degree of remove, *Six Degrees* is able to both acknowledge the constructedness and contingency of its data while recognizing connections which the authors of the *ODNB* themselves may not have emphasized. Constructing a network in this way can be a mode of looking beyond the original historiographic emphases while acknowledging, distilling, and coordinating the work of many different scholars from different times.

Aubrey's work, and the work of all the historians and biographers who came after them, combined with network analysis techniques, allows us to peer into the historical record in a new way, comparing the social roles of individuals and discovering the relationships that inflected and informed much of textual production in the early modern period. Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, particular to his personal experience and the conventions and limitations of his time though it is, offers a kind of guide to thinking through the convergence of different kinds of labors and

---

<sup>100</sup>This inference is done through a technique called the Poisson Graphical Lasso. See Warren et al.

relationships that create history, literature, and literary fame. Using historiography to model social role is a computational window into the world of interaction and collaboration that Aubrey intuited, one that allows us to see past longstanding divisions between authors and the many other figures who worked with and among them.

## Works Cited

- Ahnert, Ruth, and Sebastian E. Ahnert. "Protestant Letter Networks in the Reign of Mary I: A Quantitative Approach." *ELH* 82.1 (2015). Web. 25 Jan. 2018.
- Aubrey, John. *Brief Lives: With, An Apparatus for the Lives of Our English Mathematical Writers*. Ed. Kate Bennett. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016. Print.
- Austern, Linda Phyllis, Candace Bailey, and Amanda Eubanks Winkler, eds. *Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking Music Circulation in Early Modern England*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017. Print.
- Bernard, Stephen, ed. *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*. First edition. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015. Print.
- Bode, Katherine. "The Equivalence of 'Close' And 'Distant' Reading; Or, Toward a New Object for Data-Rich Literary History." *Modern Language Quarterly* 78.1 (2017): 77–106. Web. 25 Jan. 2018.
- Bourke, Evan. "Female Involvement, Membership, and Centrality: A Social Network Analysis of the Hartlib Circle." *Literature Compass* 14.4 (2017): n/a–n/a. Web. 24 Feb. 2018.
- Cerasano, Susan P. "Henslowe, Philip (c. 1555–1616), Theatre Financier." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Web. 24 Feb. 2018.
- . "Philip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn." *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*. Ed. Bruce R. (ed. and preface) Smith and Katherine (ed.) Rowe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2016. 928–934. Print.
- Connolly, Ruth. "Viscountess Ranelagh and the Authorisation of Women's Knowledge in the Hartlib Circle." *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558–1680*. Ed. Johanna (ed. and introd.) Harris et al. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 150–161. Print. Early Modern Literature in History (EMLH).
- Duhaime, Douglas. "Co-Citation Networks in the EEBO TCP." *Douglas Duhaime Blog*. Web. 28 Feb. 2018.
- Evans, Willa McClung. *Henry Lawes, Musician and Friend of Poets*. New York: Oxford UP, 1941. Print.
- Field, Ophelia. *The Kit-Cat Club: Friends Who Imagined a Nation*. London: Harper Press, 2008. Print.
- Gavin, Michael. "Historical Text Networks: The Sociology of Early English Criticism." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 50.1 (2016): 53–80. Web. 28 Feb. 2018.

- Greene, Jody. *The Trouble with Ownership: Literary Property and Authorial Liability in England, 1660-1730*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2005. Print. Material Texts.
- Greteman, Blaine. "Shakeosphere." *University of Iowa Libraries*. Web. 28 Feb. 2018.
- Gurr, Andrew. *Shakespeare's Workplace: Essays on Shakespearean Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017. Print.
- . *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.
- Henslowe, Philip. *Henslowe's Diary*. Ed. R. A. Foakes. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Print.
- Heuvel, Charles van den et al. "Circles of Confidence in Correspondence." *Nuncius* 31.1 (2016): 78–106. Web. 25 Jan. 2018.
- Hutton, Sarah. "Jones [Née Boyle], Katherine, Viscountess Ranelagh (1615–1691), Noblewoman Associated with the Hartlib Circle." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Web. 24 Feb. 2018.
- Johns, Adrian. *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998. Print.
- Jonson, Ben. *Bartholomew Fair*. Ed. Suzanne Gossett. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001. Print.
- Korda, Natasha. *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2011. Print.
- Loewenstein, Joseph. *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Print.
- . *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002. Print.
- Love, Harold. *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1998. Print.
- Lynch, Kathleen Martha. *Jacob Tonson, Kit-Cat Publisher*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1971. Print.
- MacKenzie, Raymond N. "Tonson, Jacob, the Elder (1655/6–1736), Bookseller." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Web. 25 Feb. 2018.
- Payne, Helen. "Russell [Née Harington], Lucy, Countess of Bedford (Bap. 1581, d. 1627), Courtier and Patron of the Arts." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* May 2014. Web. 28 June 2018.

- Philips, Katherine. *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda*. Ed. Patrick Thomas. Stump Cross Books, 1990. Print.
- Spink, Ian. *Henry Lawes: Cavalier Songwriter*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.
- . "Lawes, Henry (Bap. 1596, d. 1662), Singer and Composer." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Web. 25 Feb. 2018.
- Wall, Wendy. *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1993. Print.
- Warren, Christopher N. et al. "Six Degrees of Francis Bacon: A Statistical Method for Reconstructing Large Historical Social Networks." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 10.3 (2016): n. pag. Web. 25 Jan. 2018.

# The Imaginative Networks of Early Modern

## Print: Visualizing Book Dedications

Rather than any particular book, it is indeed these connections and correlations that should be the focus of the cultivated individual, much as a railroad switchman should focus on the relations between trains—that is, their crossings and transfers—rather than the contents of any specific convoy. ... [R]elations among ideas are far more important than the ideas themselves. (Bayard 10)

[The digital version of this chapter, which includes interactive network visualizations, can be found at [http://jrladd.com/front\\_matter](http://jrladd.com/front_matter)]

In the five chapters of this dissertation I have covered different kinds of relationships, each shaping the form of literary texts. I began with the antiquarian collaboration that produced the chorographic networks of *Poly-Olbion*; from there I explored the relationality of printed poetry collections; the rivalries of Shakespeare and Dryden; the coterie culture of Katherine Philips; and John Aubrey's accounts of relational authorship in *Brief Lives*. As these examples demonstrate, the traditional scholarly definition of collaboration—co-authorship among two or more contemporaries—is not sufficient for an understanding of the range of social relations and literary form. What we need is a broader definition of collaboration, one that encompasses a number of social and textual relationships and considers their impact on literary form.

Perhaps there are some natural objections to this approach. (1) Wouldn't defining collaboration in this way make every text a collaborative one? I do not argue that every single text should be defined as "collaborative," but I do want scholars to see every text as part of a system of social relations, and to understand that the form of a text and its sociality are mutually constitutive. In this way my work follows from D.F. McKenzie's *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* and the several decades of book history scholarship that followed. What I have provided in this dissertation is a series of case studies that fills in the outline of the authorship networks that



constitute early modern literature. But is there a way to understand the full range of relationships that bear on literary forms?

That brings me to the second objection. (2) Isn't this system of collaboration so vast as to defy any attempts to understand it as a whole? I have already shown that sensitivity to social relationships can change one's critical view of a single text or single author. But how can we understand the complete range of relationships that make up the system of collaboration? At the end of the last chapter, I proposed a method for understanding the work of authorship using quantitative network analysis to examine authors in their social systems. In this brief coda, I propose using network visualization to map collaborative relations by deriving them from printed book dedications. In fact, all of the relationships I have covered in the chapters of this dissertation can be traced through paratexts. To conclude, I would like to use a specific kind of paratext, the dedication, to begin to define a broader scope of collaborative literary relations in the early modern period. The historical persons, literary influences, religious figures, and social climbers mentioned in printed book dedications constitute the imaginative network of a text—those figures whom the dedicator has invoked as necessary to the book's intellectual world.

## **7.1 Why Dedications?**

In *How To Talk About Books You Haven't Read*, Pierre Bayard encourages us to consider the imaginative relation among books rather than simply the contents or immediate social circumstances of a particular text. Bayard's work is itself importantly connected to two intellectual traditions I have been tracing throughout this dissertation. In "Digital Shakespeare," Martin Mueller relates Bayard's practices of non-reading to the habits and tactics of distant reading—and by extension to the larger field of computational literary analysis. And by Bayard's interest in connection over intention, the book is tied to Latour's actor-network theory as

expressed in 2007's *Reassembling the Social*.<sup>101</sup> However while Latour is less interested in the role of texts within his actor-networks, Bayard posits a network of text relations independent of authors and individual experiences of reading.<sup>102</sup> Bayard's interest in textual networks and the production of meaning overlaps with my own interest in the issues that make up this dissertation—in group production, collective reading, and diffuse literary agency. This network project attempts to observe the traces of overlapping and diffuse acts of reading and writing across a wide span of time in order more fully to understand the imaginative relations between early modern texts and to show the impact of those many connections throughout the early modern period.

In the same section from which my epigraph is taken, Bayard discusses the importance of metadata for understanding the network of “connections and correlations” among books. Many network projects that attempt to understand the world of early modern print use forms of metadata—information, like titles, subject headings, and publication information, extrinsic to the text itself—rather than the contents of the text or any part of the text. *Shakeosphere* is made from metadata: the information in the English Short Title Catalog. *Six Degrees* is derived from the metacommentary on social relationships available in the secondary sources of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. *Historical Text Networks* are made from a combination of Early English Books Online metadata, imprint information specifically, and additional information from paratexts. Paratexts occupy a liminal position between data and metadata. As part of the primary source, they can be considered data itself, but for the ways they comment on and relate to the main text, they are also a form of metadata. My project takes a specific paratextual form, the dedication, as its main source of (meta)data.

---

<sup>101</sup>Bayard's and Latour's work are connected in other ways: they are both French theorists engaged in a critical theory dialogue, and both of these books were published in 2007.

<sup>102</sup>Latour's notable exception is in investment in the creation of good, “complete” scholarly sociology texts, but on the subject of literary texts, *Reassembling the Social* is basically silent.

The idea for this project came out of my reading of John Dryden's many long dedications, epistles, and prefaces; Dryden does not limit himself to discussing only the dedicatee of the text: he winds his way through an extensive network of patrons, friends, detractors, rivals, and literary influences. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Dryden alludes to Lord Rochester in his preface to *All for Love* as one of his "sucking Critics", referring to him as that "Rhyming Judge of the Twelve-penny Gallery" among other nasty nicknames.<sup>103</sup> By this time in his career, Dryden's once friendly patronage relation with Rochester had become a bitter rivalry, and as evidenced by the lengthy riposte to Rochester in the preface, this literary competition clearly took up some space in Dryden's psyche. As I argue in that chapter, the rivalry has an impact not only on the mentality or psychology of the author but on the text itself—Dryden reframes the imitative *All for Love* as a kind of competition with Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. The invocation of Rochester therefore signals competition in another way. *All for Love* comprises a competitive landscape of the imagination that importantly includes Rochester. The paratext, as a carrier of social information about the text, allows the reader insight into the imaginative networks that build the text.

While it inspired the project, Rochester's appearance by proxy in the preface to *All for Love* presents a series of problems for working with paratext mentions at scale. Importantly Rochester is only alluded to in the text and not directly mentioned at all. On top of that, the allusion occurs in the preface to the play rather than its dedication. A full account of collaborative networks must

---

<sup>103</sup>There are both technical and conceptual problems in dealing with allusions as opposed to direct mentions of names. As I discuss in the next paragraph, while computational techniques for finding allusions and oblique references are improving, they are not currently easy to use or deploy, and for the sake of time and efficiency I do not attempt to catalog allusions at all in the current version of this project. Beyond the technical issue, allusions raise a number of other difficulties that direct address does not. Allusions may be intended for members of an in-group only while confounding outsiders. Even if all readers would have easily understood a particular reference at the time of publication, as time passes the allusion may become less recognizable. A seventeenth-century reader might have quickly known that the "Rhyming Judge of the Twelve-penny Gallery" was Rochester, but a modern reader will likely not understand without the help of a footnote. As time passes, we would need to consider how the effects of a particular allusion might fade, and what effect the receding referent might have on subsequent readings. These are fascinating and important issues for textual criticism, but they are outside the scope of the project at this time.

entail attention to such powerful, but shadowy linkages as Rochester's influence on *All for Love*, and not only is it not directly exerted on the sample I have chosen – the dedicatory paratext – but its influence on the preface cannot yet be captured algorithmically. Therefore to make headway on this project, I had to find ways to limit its scope.<sup>104</sup> While progress is being made on textual and personal allusion (as an extension of the problem of text reuse), for the sake of this project finding direct mentions of names was difficult enough. Likewise there are many kinds of paratexts (encomia, dedications, prefaces, etc.) that provide different sorts of information about the imaginative space of the text. A future version of the project could capture names and allusions in every paratext, using natural language processing and machine learning techniques to keep track of their sources for more nuanced analyses. In this project, I simplified by adhering to the most common type of paratext, the dedication, which also usually includes the most direct references to individual people.

Given this limitation, what kinds of information can we expect to find in dedications? Historians of the book have long noted the crucial role of patrons, publishers, printers, and booksellers alongside authors in the process of text creation. These individuals, all important parts of the network of early modern print, can be easily discovered by traditional research methods and are often important to textual metadata in online archives like Early English Books Online.<sup>105</sup> But like the Rochester allusion, dedications include even more names. Who else, besides dedicator and dedicatee, is mentioned in a dedication? Consider this example from EEBO-TCP—the dedication to Samuel Hartlib's *A description of the famous Kingdome of Macaria* (1641):

---

<sup>104</sup>See the Methods section of this essay for a detailed account of the steps I took.

<sup>105</sup>For early modernists, EEBO is likely the most significant online archive available: a collection of digital images, based on microfilm, of nearly every available printed text in English. The machine-readable extension of EEBO, the Text Creation Partnership (usually abbreviated as EEBO-TCP), has made complex computation possible on top of this massive collection of early modern texts.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 TO THE HIGH  
 AND  
 HONOURABLE  
 COURT  
 OF  
 PARLIAMENT.

**W**Hereas I am confident, that this Honourable Court will lay the Corner Stone of the worlds happinesse before the final recess thereof, I have adventured to cast in my widowes mite into the Treasurie, not as an Instrueter, or Counsellour, to this Honourable Assembly, but have deli.

A 2

delivered my conceptions in a Fiction, as a more mannerly way, having for my pattern Sir Thomas Moore, and Sir Francis Bacon once Lord Chancellour of *England*; and humbly desire that this honourable Assembly will be pleased to make use of any thing therein contained, if it may stand with their pleasures, and to laugh at the rest, as a solace to my minde, being enclined to doe good to the publick. So humbly craving leave, that I may take my leave, I rest this 25. of October 1641.

Figure 16. Dedication to Hartlib's *Macaria*

This dedication follows the conventional form by including an elaborate header that addresses the dedicatee, in this case the “High and Honorable Court of Parliament” rather than any single individual. But Hartlib names two other individuals, More and Bacon, in the body of the dedication, and he even labels them as his “pattern” or role models in this publishing venture. Neither More (who died in 1535) nor Bacon (who died in 1626) would show up in a network graph focused on reconstituting the lived early modern social world of 1641, but Hartlib mentions them at the book’s opening. This habit of non-contemporary naming is repeated in the texts of many early modern dedications: some of the individuals mentioned have died recently, others are writers and influences from another time entirely, and others are living persons from far outside the London social structure. Of course scholars have long traced the networks of influences and allusions that surround literary texts, but we have been slower to consider these

relations in concert with the social and economic relations that make up early modern writing. The imaginative network of a text involves all of these figures together, and by considering them in a single network, a peopled imagination, we can better understand the many motivations that underlie text creation, including social and cultural aspiration, anxieties of influence, patronage, and social relationships.

I also use this example to highlight something important about the way we conceive of print networks: just as the landscape of reading is made up of recently published texts and texts that first appeared long before, the landscape of print is made up of actors who are not physically present in the social world but are nonetheless crucial to understanding how the relation between persons and texts was constructed. The lack of physical presence is not a critical problem because the networks I am building are not social networks in the traditional sense—they are imaginative networks. The relation between an author or text and a name mentioned in a dedication is an imaginative relation. When an author does not personally know the individual they are invoking in a dedication, or even when they do, the appearance of that name stakes out an intellectual and imaginative space for the *idea* of that person that could but need not necessarily fall back on any first-hand relationship with that person. These imaginative relations abound during the creation of a text—we all carry the ideas of many people we may not currently know: public figures, deceased relatives, people we would like to meet. A dedication is one place where these imaginative relations can take form through naming, direct reference, and allusion. My project attempts to recover these relations—at least the ones available through direct reference—and map them at scale.

Where Michael Gavin's networks are based only on the author and direct recipient of certain paratexts, by capturing a wider range of names *within* dedications I am able to make suppositions

about the wider set of correlations and connections across time that make up early modern print. Douglas Duhaime may have gotten closest to this kind of network in his co-citation network of texts derived from bibliographic citations present in early modern texts.<sup>106</sup> But I am interested in the ways in which living social relationships and textual citations and influences overlap. I accomplish this by a deliberate refusal not to eliminate names that I find within dedications—in effect capturing both those long-dead figures who may have influenced the book and the author’s direct contemporaries who may have had a direct hand in the book’s production. While this approach differs from other network analysis projects, it follows a well-established model of historical work that connects living and long-dead authors through lines of influence. Through this decision not to eliminate names I show that the many types of relations to a book sketched in its dedication need not be so different from one another, and that to understand the full field of early modern print it is necessary that we consider the whole network together. Rather than thinking of networks’ tendency to flatten time as a drawback, I hope to use it here to my critical advantage.

With this operating principle, I employed a method for finding names in dedications indiscriminately, concerning myself only with the fact that a name appeared in a dedication and not with why or how. What can we learn by studying the patterns of these names when we gather them at an increased scale, and how might such patterns direct our energies in the study of particular persons or texts?

## 7.2 Methods

Before I attempt some preliminary answers to the questions raised in the previous section, a brief overview of the method used here will be useful. Up to this point my dissertation work has

---

<sup>106</sup>More information on each of these projects and their relation to my own approach to early modern networks can be found in Chapter 5.

focused on the most recognizable and widely-used form of social networks: networks of people, alive at the same time, whose relationship to one another formed a direct interaction.<sup>107</sup> But the question of simultaneity has run all through the different case studies in the previous chapters. It was present in Selden's continued interest, even decades after the fact, in the issues Drayton set forth in *Poly-Olbion*; it was a concern for James Philips as he shepherded his late wife's poetry into print; and it was certainly on Dryden's mind as he translated Virgil and adapted the plays of Shakespeare. Anyone who works within network analysis has had to confront the dimensions of time—a common criticism of networks as a form is that their mathematical and visual representations flatten time.<sup>108</sup> Many network projects deal with this issue by limiting their dataset to specific timespans. *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon* only allows a relation or edge to exist between two persons while they are alive at the same time. But if they did not live simultaneously, *Six Degrees* will not record a relation between them (Warren et al.). Likewise, in their networks of the print record, Blaine Greteman's *Shakeosphere* and Michael Gavin's *Historical Text Networks* only record relations among people producing texts together at the same time. These limitations make sense if your purpose, as it is in these projects, is to create an accurate, traditional social network of contemporaneous relationships. While this restriction is helpful in most cases, networks that have more flexible interpretative frameworks can tell us much more as we increase the scope of our data.

The network is based on texts available through the Early English Books Online, Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP) public release, a collection of approximately 25,000 early modern texts printed in England (or written in English) that were first converted to microfilm and eventually

---

<sup>107</sup>Here and throughout this essay, I use the term *relationship* in the common sense of a friendship or other lived, immediate connection between two people. By contrast I use the broader term *relation* when referring to a larger category of possible kinds of connections.

<sup>108</sup>A relatively new subfield within quantitative network analysis, known as dynamic networks, attempts to create new network models that deal with change over time in a systematic way. Many of these methods are very new and have not yet been adapted for wide use.



digital images—as EEBO—and then hand-keyed into eXtensible Markup Language (XML)—as the TCP. Thanks to the thorough tagging work of the TCP, I was able easily to extract plaintext of every section of a text marked up as a “DEDICATION.” The “DEDICATION” attribute is not infallible: there may be certain dedicatory text-segments that were not marked as dedications, as well as other types of paratext (encomia, prefaces, etc.) that were given the wrong tags. A future version of this project may attempt to be more all-encompassing in its approach to paratext.

Early modern texts present many challenges to named-entity recognition (NER), the natural language processing technique I used to find names of persons in those dedications. Irregular orthography, non-standardized capitalization, initialism, pseudonymy, and anonymity all present distinct challenges to computer-assisted name recognition. To deal with some of these challenges, I began by processing the text through MorphAdorner, Northwestern University’s tool for standardizing and part-of-speech tagging digitized text. MorphAdorner regularizes words, standardizes spelling, and add tags for parts of speech. I tried a number of ready-made NER approaches, including the popular Stanford NER, NLTK, and SpaCy software packages, before I found one that handled the challenges of early modern names. The drawback of all these NER classifiers is that they are trained on modern language corpora (usually on a news corpus) and therefore much better suited to finding names in modern language texts. I could train a classifier myself if I had a substantial corpus of early modern texts in which names were already tagged, but such a corpus does not exist. Instead I was able to take advantage of part-of-speech tagging within MorphAdorner, which unlike the other natural language processing tools is designed to work well on early modern language. MorphAdorner does not have an NER classifier, but it detects proper nouns with greater accuracy than other tools. Beginning with MorphAdorner’s list of proper nouns, I was able to write a short list of rules in Python that pulled out the names and dealt with much of the spelling variation in the corpus. However I kept

only the words identified by the script as multi-term names of persons. I eliminated single-term names because most of them were either the result of error (one-word Latin terms the script wrongly identified as names) or impossible to disambiguate (the one-word name “James” would likely appear in many dedications, but there is no way of knowing to whom it refers).<sup>109</sup> All multi-term names (including ones like “Queen Elizabeth” in which one word is a title or other identifier) were included in the final graph, which is drawn in JavaScript using Mike Bostock’s D3 force-directed graph script.

Readers already familiar with network analysis may recognize the resulting network’s features, but it is worth walking through some of the basic attributes to highlight their importance to my analysis. Networks are made up of nodes (usually represented as circles) which stand for the entities that are connected, and edges (usually represented as lines), which stand for the connections themselves. Though in social networks nodes typically represent people and edges represent social relationships, networks are a data structure that can hold any kind of relational information. It is possible to have a network of cell phone towers, a network of bivalve reproduction, a network of foods and their tastes (Ahn et al.). The important thing in a network is to carefully define the nature of the edge relation, but that connection (even when the entities are people) need not be a human relationship. A network of people could be connected by who shares the same height or eye color. In my project, a connection is nothing more or less than a name’s presence in a dedication—sometimes this maps onto a social relationship, and sometimes it does not. One of the purposes of this project is to interrogate the overlap and gaps between a social relationship and a dedicatory mention.

---

<sup>109</sup>This certainly has an impact on my ability to track important one-word names like Virgil and Horace, or even Shakespeare when referred to by surname only. For the sake of accuracy in my current name-detection method.

Most network projects, including the early modern projects I mentioned above, use unimodal network graphs, in which nodes represent only one class of object: people. The networks I created for this project are bimodal or bipartite; there are two types of nodes which represent two classes of objects, people and texts. Usually the two types are represented by node color or shape—in my visualizations a person node is orange while a text node is blue. My choice of a bipartite network is as much ideological as it is technical. In a bimodal graph, a node can only connect to a node of its opposite type; therefore in my graph, people can only be connected through texts represented in the TCP corpus.<sup>110</sup> My dedicatory networks do not graph the abstract early modern social world: instead they graph a series of relations mediated by printed objects, which themselves have a place within the structure of the graph. Seeing texts alongside persons in a network helps us to reconsider what counts as “social” in the world of early modern print, and the widened scope of the NER script expands the boundaries of who “counts” as a collaborator or influence with/on a text. In the 1639-48 graph, “S. Paul” and “Lord Hastings” are connected through a text by William Parks. This is not to say that Parks’ relationship to the religious figure and the lordly patron are the same, but it highlights how dedicatory practice expands our notion of relevant social figures.

As Michael Gavin does, I could have represented texts as edges and left only one kind of node: people. However I want to call attention to the ways in which texts mark people (through their dedications) as well as the ways in which people mark texts. I accomplish this in two ways. The first is that I use a directed network rather than an undirected one. A network is directed when its connections cannot be reciprocal. Letter networks are a classic example: a letter has a sender and

---

<sup>110</sup>Of course, some references to people, like a mention of “Virgil,” may actually refer to texts or a set of texts, as a kind of citation. Two things remain important to remember: the “people” whose names I detect are not the people themselves but textual traces, sometimes associated with a specific text; the texts that I record are only the TCP texts and not other texts that might otherwise be cited or mentioned (like the *Aeneid*). The computational method cannot differentiate a purely citational mention of Virgil from a more complex invocation of the man: though we should treat the notion that there is a clear distinction between these two categories with poststructuralist caution.

a recipient. Network analysts use the terms *source* and *target* to refer to these two different sides of a directed connection, and directed edges are usually represented by displaying an arrow at one end of the line. A network is undirected when its connections are mutual or reciprocal. A network of Facebook friends is an undirected network, as two “friends” on the service must mutually assent to share a relationship. When processing texts, I kept track of who appeared in the body of a dedication, in its salutation, and in its closing. Because dedications normally have this structure, a dedication network is similar to a directed letter network. When a name appears in the closing of a dedication, that person is typically the dedicator (and also usually the author of the book), so the person is the source of the relation while the text is the target. When a name appears in the salutation or body of a dedication, the person is the target of the relation while the source is the book—in this case the book’s dedication has marked that person as somehow important to the text, either as a dedicatee, an influence, a citation, or some other referent.

The other way in which I reinforce that the network of texts is as important as the network of people is through a technique called *projection*. In a bipartite network, it is possible to project the network onto one set of relations or another. Projection assumes mutual connection to nodes of one part as a connection between nodes of the other. Two people who are connected to the same text would, when the network is projected, be connected to one another. Likewise two texts that mention the same person would be connected to each other if the network were projected over texts. In this way it is possible to view my network in three ways: as a network of people and texts, as a network of people *connected by* texts, and as a network of texts *connected by* people. The network of texts makes an especially important rhetorical point, since in my network I am

never dealing with actual persons but always with textual proxies for those people.<sup>111</sup> Even when identifying people, the network is primarily textual.

I began by discussing the limitations and affordances of using networks to describe connections over time, and there are several ways I deal with time in the network visually and analytically. The first is simply in terms of color. I already mentioned I use different hues, orange and blue, to represent people and texts respectively. But within the blue nodes, I use a gradient from light to dark blue to represent the publication date of the text. This gives a quick visual sense of where a text falls roughly when looking at a graph that has a large timespan. Because I do not limit relations by timespan, i.e. I do not discount a relationship because the person was not alive when the book was published, it becomes easy to see which figures are connected to texts from across the period. In these cases the affordances of “flat” network visualization show through; the reader can tell right away when a certain figure has dedicatory staying power for a long period of time.

However showing time only in terms of color gradient is inexact: you can see rough temporal distinctions, but these often are not enough for a scholar looking to draw conclusions about dedicatory networks in specific time periods. To answer these questions, I made it possible to draw a sliding time filter across the whole network, borrowing a technique I helped to develop while working on *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon*. At the bottom of the network visualization is a bar graph showing the number of texts with dedications in each year. By resizing and/or sliding a window across that graph, you can easily select a specific, shorter time period and look at the nodes and edges only in that period.

---

<sup>111</sup>It was Rachel Midura who pointed this out to me when I presented an early version of this work at the Early Modern Digital Agendas seminar at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

A major impetus for conducting this project was my desire to see how dedication networks changed across periods of political crisis and upheaval. To do this I initially collected data that was pre-organized by time period. For example I collected and processed texts only from the approximate years of civil conflict (1639-49), then from the Republican and Protectorate rule (1650-59), then the Restoration (1660-85), and so on, to compare the political eras. However having texts in predefined groupings limited my perspective on the data. You might instead want to organize texts by different periods of press freedom, using 1642 as a dividing line.<sup>112</sup> Having an interactive filter, and being able to clearly see the frequency of dedications across time, allows scholars browsing the network to make those decisions for themselves. And it allowed me to begin to see patterns in dedicatory practice, influence, and collaboration across time.

## 7.3 Results

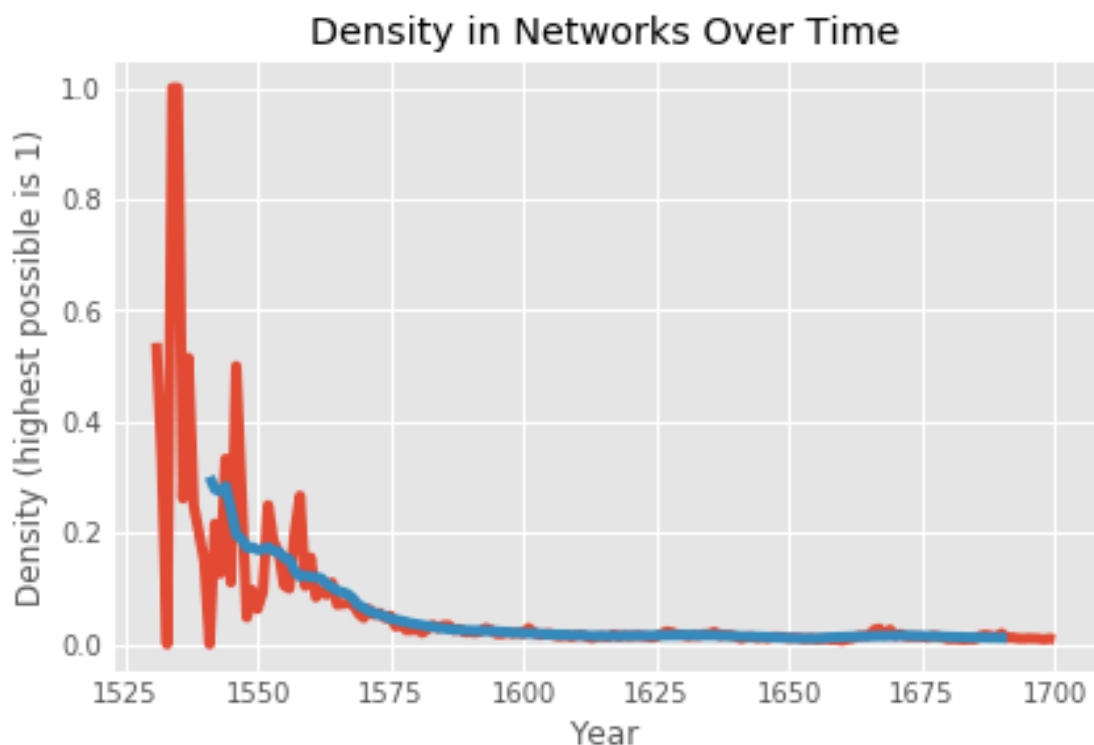
The “Background, Method, Results” structure taken from the sciences and now more frequently adopted by digital humanists does not lend itself well to most humanities arguments. While some computational projects have clear results that can be reported, most examples of DH writing, including this one, require reflection and interpretation unsuited to the finality that the word “results” implies. While I do intend to report on conclusions drawn from this data, an equally important outcome of the data collection and visualization done in this project is its wider usefulness for other scholars with different questions about dedicatory practice in the early modern period. To facilitate both of these outcomes, I provide here both an interpretation of the data with respect to my research questions and a reflection on the exploration interface I built to enable further study of this dataset.

Even a cursory browse of the network data allows me to make some claims about patterns in early modern dedicatory practice. Looking at the network over time, we see that the network’s

---

<sup>112</sup>It was another colleague from EMDA, Marie Alice Belle, who first suggested this grouping.

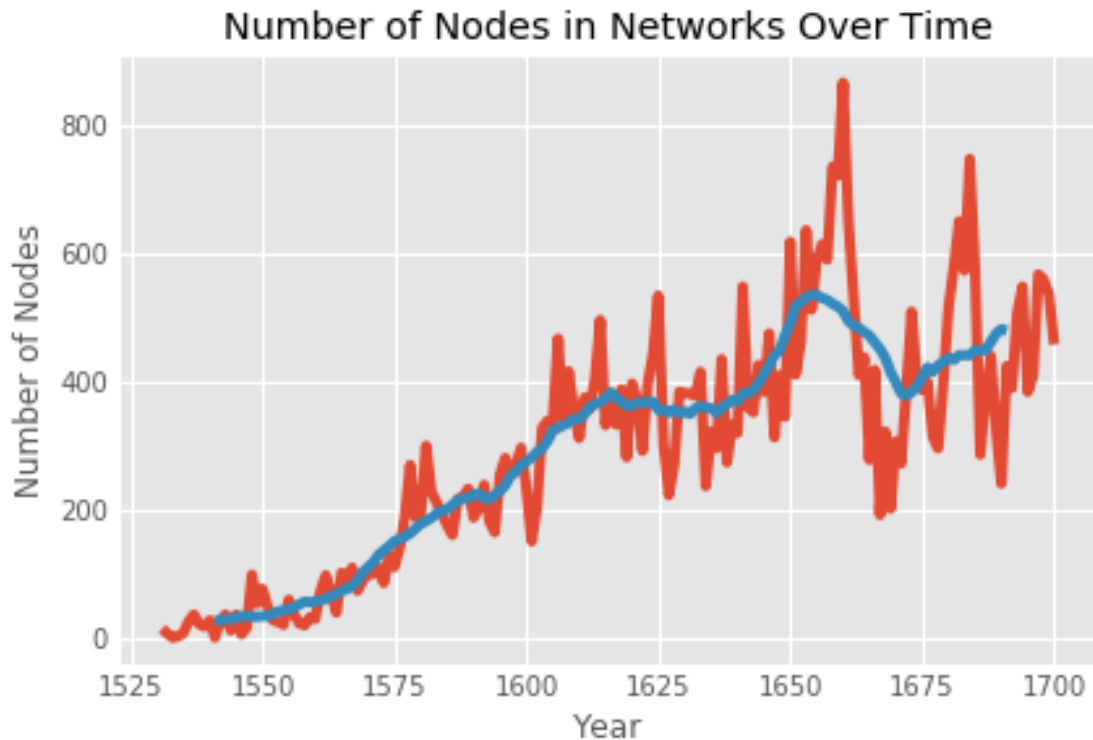
basic structure is unchanged despite many political, social, and religious changes.<sup>113</sup> The network's density—a measure of the relative number of edges to nodes in a network that expresses how connected the social world is—remains consistent over time despite including every name in each dedication. In the graph below, the blue line shows the smoothed out trend: after some variation in the earlier years of print (when the networks are so small as to be unrepresentative), the trend quickly flattens out.



**Figure 17. Network Density over Time**

This is true even though the number of nodes in these networks is trending upwards over time (commensurate with increases in the number of texts printed):

<sup>113</sup>By “looking at the network over time,” I mean that I have sliced the networks into subgraphs by year and compared yearly metrics to one another.



**Figure 18. Total Number of Nodes over Time**

Though the network includes a mixture of figures from the distant past, those of the recent past, and living 16th and 17th-century people, the basic structure matches a typical social network.

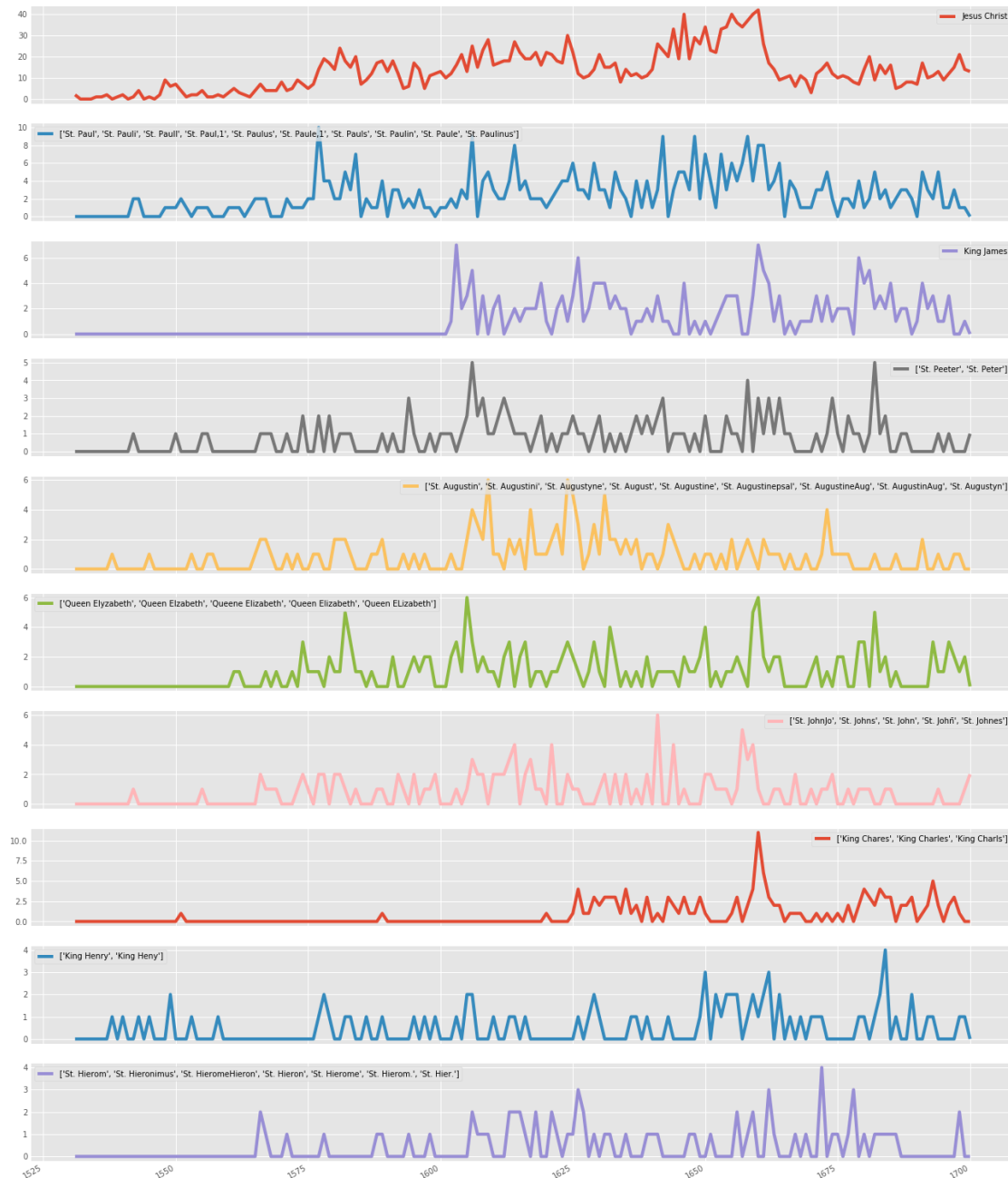
This suggests that the social behaviors surrounding dedications occur regardless of whether the participants in that network are alive. Aristotle can have as much influence in the network as Shakespeare, though of a different kind. In other words, the imaginative network of early modern print behaves like a “real” network, despite a preponderance of names from far outside of the period.

In fact, names from the distant past appear with more regularity across the corpus than contemporary figures almost as a rule. I see this as an important corrective to the typical practice of using dedications to tell us only about author-patron relations. It is now a commonplace in studies of reception to recognize that readers do not choose only from a crop of books newly



published in a given era, but from a variety of books published before then. Reading practices are often backward-looking, and any one person's reading can include books published across a long span of time. Likewise with dedicatory practice, while early modern books are almost always dedicated to a living person, the names that appear in dedications can include a range of influences, citations, and relations from across a very wide span. A dedication—whether written before or after the main text—works along with other paratexts to signal the reader to the book's wide imaginative network. The invocation of names in the dedication allows readers to situate a book and its author within a network of influences, citations, and allusions. Repetition of a particular referent across several book dedications builds up a set of connections between books, and may suggest the importance of particular figures in networks of reading and book production over time.

The first thing we may ask of the data, then, is how to determine which referents are most important in the network over time. The traditional way to measure a node's importance within a network is through a set of measures under the umbrella term “centrality.” The simplest kind of centrality is degree—the number of connections a single node possesses. If a person has relationships with ten other people, their degree is ten. Betweenness centrality measures how often a node connects disparate groups or communities within the network. These two centrality measures can be used together as a tool for thinking about a name's importance in the dedicatory network. Below is a graph of the top ten appearing names over all and the number of mentions each received per year.



**Figure 19. Top Ten Names and Dedications Per Year<sup>114</sup>**

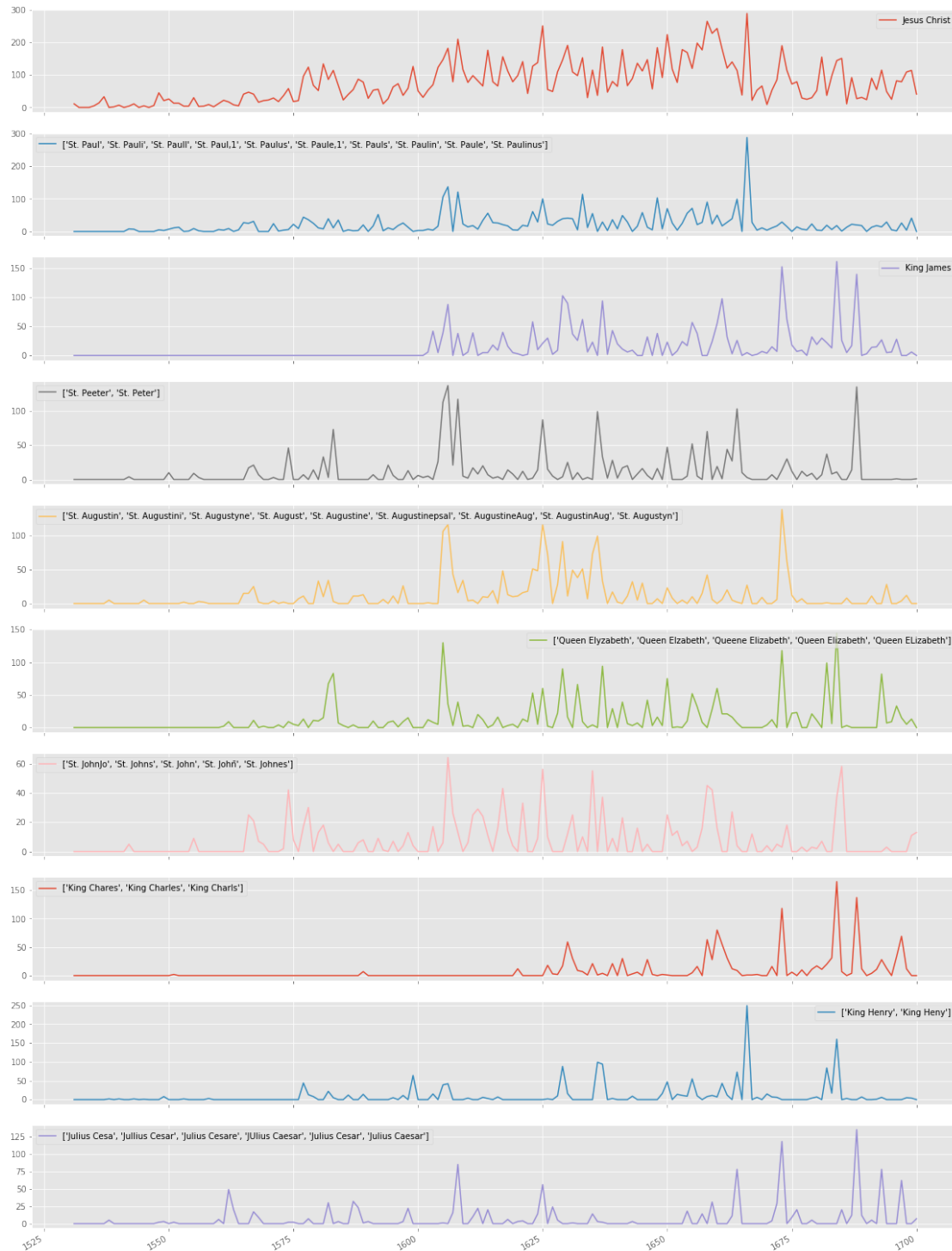
In a bipartite network like this one, the raw mentions count is an insufficient account of a node's degree, as we want to know how many other people (and not just texts) to which an individual is

<sup>114</sup>There is some potential for confusion between the Roman consul Julius Caesar and the early modern man who changed his name to match. My network only searches for textual signifiers and does not disambiguate people in this way. However the frequency with which Caesar is mentioned long before the birth of the early modern Julius Caesar suggests that the majority of these mentions refer to the Roman leader.

connected. Here is the same graph reorganized by degree on its projected graph, an extrapolation of basic degree that gets at this question:<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup>I simply projected each graph to the set of people and then calculated degree on the newly projected graph. This gives us a sense of how many connections to other people nodes each node in our network has.



**Figure 20. Top Ten Names and Projected Degree Per Year**

Consider the degree of Queen Elizabeth (in green on the graph above). Variations on her name appear throughout the corpus, beginning as Princess Elizabeth before her reign and hitting a high

point in the decade before her death. Her degree from 1595 to 1603 is 163, outstripping perennially common names such as St. Augustine and St. Paul.<sup>116</sup> It is not at all surprising that Elizabeth's height in the network would be at the conclusion of her reign, when many authors would seek her favor by dedicating a book to her, or even by giving her a mention in a dedication to someone else. Significantly, Elizabeth's influence does not decrease as much after her death as one would think. If we only looked at dedicatees we would see a steep drop-off, but Elizabeth remains in or near the top 10 nodes by degree all the way through 1640s and 50s. By looking in this mathematical way network at the network over time, we get a more complete view of a person's symbolic and literary importance. An individual's effect on reading, writing, and publishing extends long after their death.

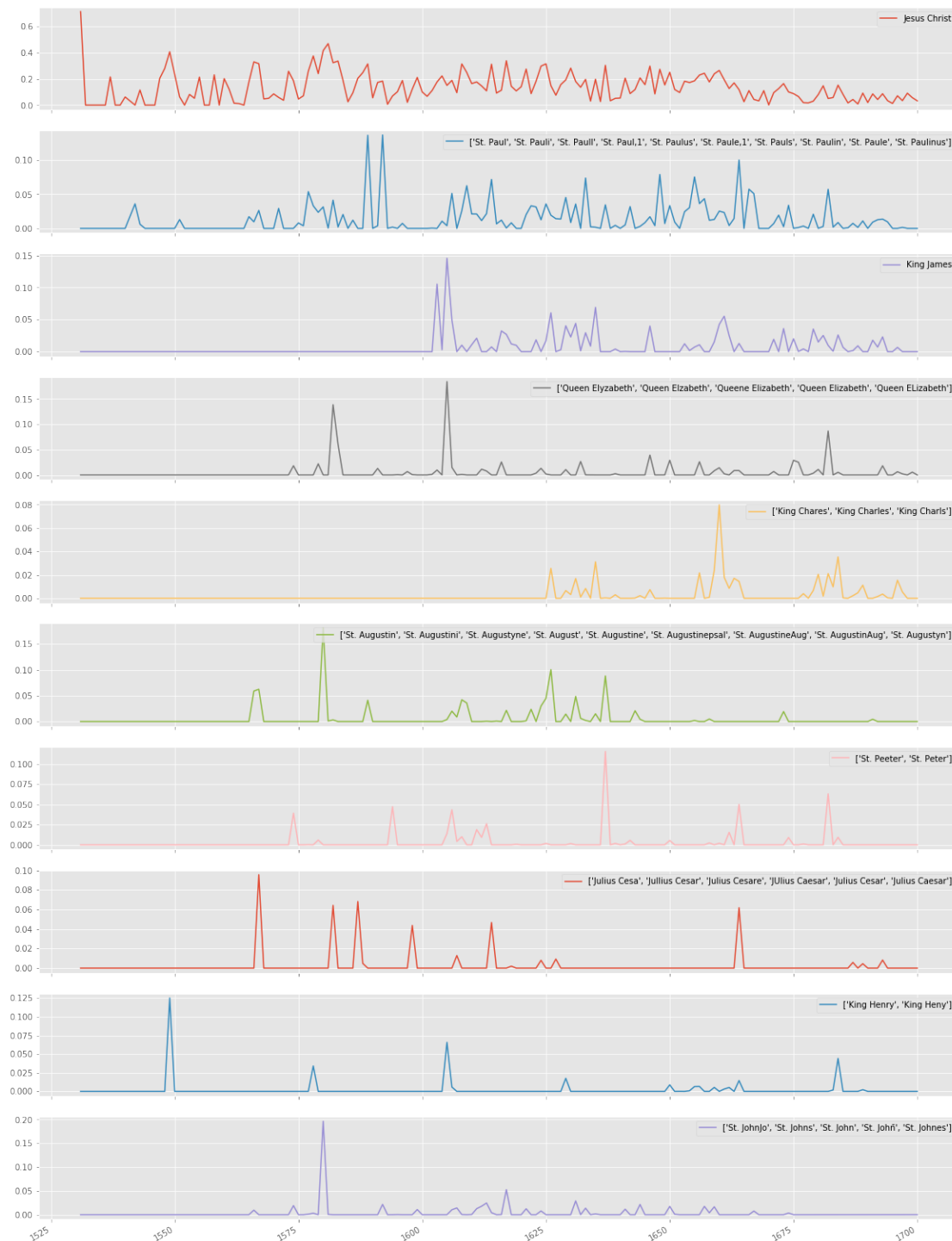
The highest centrality name across the period, regardless of the centrality measure chosen, is Jesus Christ. On its face this observation does not tell us much—of course many early modern books, a large portion of which concern religious matters, would mention Christ in their dedications. However betweenness centrality tells a different story. While accounting for nodes like “Jesus Christ” that are so common they break the scale, most thematic names like Caesar or St. Augustine tend to have high degree but low betweenness centrality. That is to say, they are mentioned by a lot of texts in the same part of the network, but they don't tend to connect different parts of the network to one another.

Betweenness centrality can give us a sense of those names which are used in a variety of texts in different network communities. This likely suggests that they tie together texts that would otherwise be linked only by one or two of the major names in the top ten. The names with high betweenness centrality, which tend to belong to contemporary or recent political figures, give structure to the overall network. Removing these names would cause the network to be divided

---

<sup>116</sup>Most of these connections are from the year of her death.

into disconnected components around the high-degree names. Some of the names in this group are patrons, others are important political figures—like Elizabeth I and James I—who are likely being used to lend prestige to the book. Rather than being tied to the book’s thematic content, these names seem to be used in a more political way, to associate the book with the prestige of a known entity but still to situate it within its specific political, social, and cultural context.



**Figure 21. Top Ten Names by Betweenness and their Betweenness Centrality Per Year**

The relation between a book's contents and its dedicatory mentions calls attention to the importance of framing the data as a bipartite network. Rather than merely being a network of

people connected by texts, this data tells us as much, if not more, about the connections among texts as those among people. The popularity of different kinds of books lends itself to the appearance of certain names in dedications, and the appearance of those names signals the popular categories in which books belong. In the 1590s and early 1600s, for example, the increased centrality of Luther, Calvin, and Hus signals a growing market for Protestant texts in the late part of Elizabeth's reign as well as an increase in the desire among authors to curry social favor by espousing interest in major Protestant thinkers. The social concerns of dedicatory practice and the economic ones are inextricably linked—by viewing texts and names together we get a better sense of the way these two drivers for dedicatory naming overlap.

Beyond the transhistorical importance of specific names and texts, the same data can be used to address the question of changes in dedicatory practice over time. The best test case for this is the original impetus for the project, the period spanning from the 1630s through the 1660s. How did political upheaval change dedicatory practice and by extension the literary networks of the seventeenth century? Slicing the network by decade instead of by year makes this kind of analysis possible.<sup>117</sup>

By degree:

---

<sup>117</sup>I've eliminated Christ and St. Paul from the first graph and just Christ from the second in order to more easily see shifts in mentions of the other names.



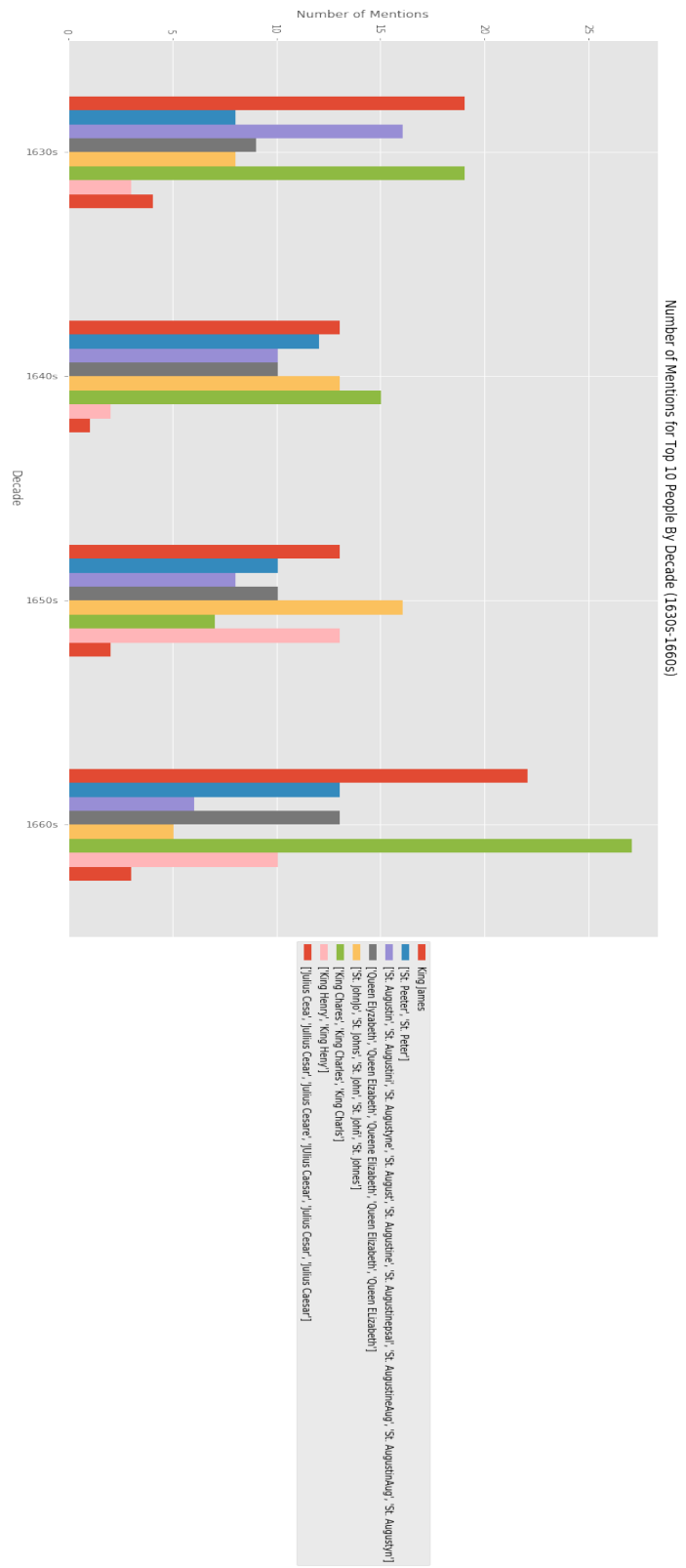


Figure 22. Top Ten Names and Their Degree By Decade

220

By betweenness centrality:

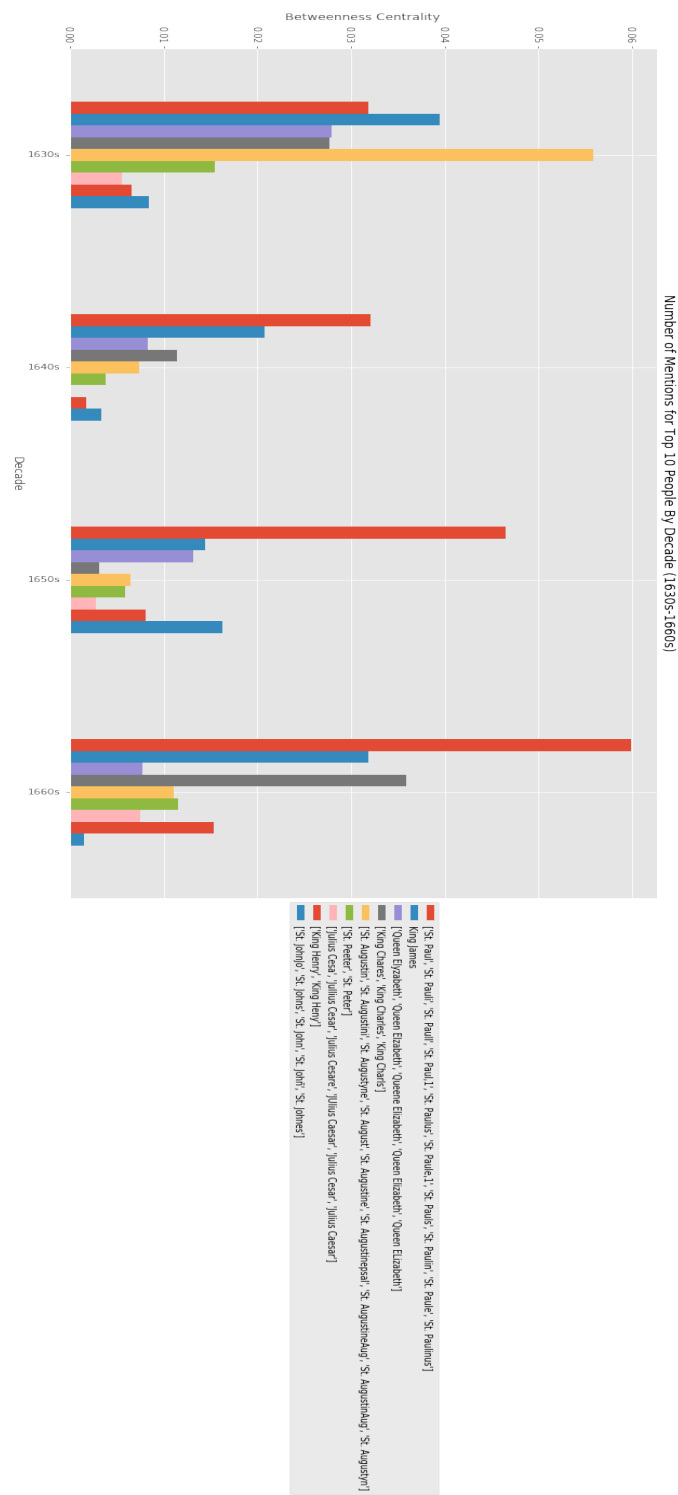


Figure 23. Top Ten Names and Their Betweenness By Decade

Looking at the network in the 1630s, many of the top names are similar to those of previous decades: there is a mixture of current political figures, saints, and ancient thinkers. In the 1640s, some of those nodes remain prominent, but particularly in terms of betweenness centrality (see below) the order and distribution of those names change. Centralities of “King Henry” and “Queen Elizabeth” go up, for one thing, and contemporary non-royal figures begin to crop up in the top ten and twenty names. One possible explanation for this is that the Republican government has disrupted the normal flow of social capital. With the King and much of the nobility imprisoned or in exile, the network is deprived of its usual go-to names for reference. In response, authors on both sides of the political spectrum seem to harken back to a previous, more stable political era. This is again where the flexibility of using the names of recently deceased political figures comes in; their reputation can be marshalled for a variety of political arguments. Charles I is central in the 1630s to some degree, though one limitation of presenting the data in this way is that it is difficult to tell *how* he is being talked about in these dedications. But whether talked about positively or negatively, his influence still has an outsized effect on the networks of the 1640s.

Things change more markedly after 1649. The execution of Charles I seems to have more finality in relation to his naming in dedications than the natural deaths of other monarchs. After his death Charles disappears from the list of most central names in the network, though Elizabeth and James still feature prominently. Pauline references, though in somewhat of a downslide during the war years, increase in frequency alongside topical biblical references like John the Baptist, whose beheading (along with Paul’s own martyrdom) could have been on the minds of authors and publishers reflecting on the death of the king. Crucially, the two Republican leaders Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell join the monarchs as top names in betweenness centrality: as one might expect, Fairfax in the 40s and Cromwell in the 50s. In the 1660s the network returns to

some pre-Interregnum patterns, but clear differences emerge. Centralities for King James hit a high point, suggesting nostalgia for the originator of the Stuart line in England. The name “King Charles” of course also is prominent, though this time referring to Charles II and signifying the restoration of both the monarchy and more traditional dedicatory and patronage practices.

Though the return of monarchs and recently deceased political figures suggests a return to pre-1640 network behavior, there is also evidence of shifts in social behavior as it manifests in dedicatory practice. For example, the formation of the Royal Society and its subsequent flurry of publishing activity elevates names like Kenelm Digby into the group of high betweenness centrality nodes. New intellectual communities that form in the Restoration world begin to make their mark on the print landscape alongside names that we would “expect” to see given the shape of pre-war networks.

I have sketched out in these examples some suppositions that might be made based on the data available, but these should not be viewed as irrefutable arguments derived from objective datasources. Instead we should think of the network as representing the print world, and that representation as a form of argumentation. The choice to collect and display the information I have here collected as a network is an interpretive choice, one that lends itself to certain further interpretations and inferences. While it may be tempting to think of quantitative network analysis and other computational methods as neutral tools which derive from some properties that already exist within the data, a network is instead an interpretative structure that makes certain aspects of an object visible while obscuring others. I have already mentioned the ways in which networks often obscure the dimension of time, this is just one of the ways in which networks work against certain argumentative frames even while making new arguments possible.

There are two parts to networks as representation—the mathematical representation of degree and other metrics, and the visual representation of the node-link diagram.<sup>118</sup> So far I have spent most of the time talking about the mathematical representation: the ways in which the computational network structure allows us to make observations on the network’s density, on the relative importance of individual nodes, and more. Like the mathematical representation, the visual representation suggests certain arguments about how the world of print might or should look to researchers. In the first place I return to my previously-declared stubbornness about including every name in a dedication as part of the network. By visualizing the names of all mentions in printed dedications rather than just the names of dedicatees, I argue that these networks, both mathematical and visual, represent the network of print as an analog to the way the dedications themselves represent it. This network representation does a better job of reflecting the full scope of dedicatory relations than do other representations of the same social world. The ability to see all those names existing together in a single network, ranked by their importance to the books regardless of whether they had lived social connections to one another allows researchers to understand that print connections were not as reliant on lived social connections as one might think at first.

As Chris Warren reminds us in his recent essay on the long history of network visualization, networks have long been a way of making visible that which was previously invisible. Early modern printers, stationers, and authors conceived of the social world of print as a conversation; that is why there are so many names in these dedications in the first place. By making this practice visible, I hope to have brought forward a way of thinking transhistorically about the existing connections in the early modern print record. I have supplemented the network view

---

<sup>118</sup>The true mathematical representation of a network is the adjacency matrix, which makes available the many metrics and calculations that can be done with networks. However, this project is dealing only indirectly with matrices.

with other visualizations that elaborate on this same theme. A bar chart of texts by year gives a sense of the overall distribution of texts and always shows the researcher how many texts they are viewing at any one time. If the network looks sparse, it could be because there were fewer names mentioned in that timespan or simply fewer texts overall—the bar graph makes it clear which one of these possibilities is true at a glance. I have also added histograms—bar graphs that show distribution—to the right of the network that show the distribution of different types of centrality in the current network view. What a researcher will see most frequently on these graphs is a typical distribution of centrality in a network, with a few nodes of very high centrality, a great many with very low centrality, and barely any in between. This is typical in a social network—reputation accrues quickly to a few central figures, and attention is spread evenly among the rest. Seeing this visually alongside the network at every point reminds the viewer of the large number of nodes that are easy to overlook—the people mentioned in only a few texts who might constitute an important part of a particular neighborhood in the graph. One of the larger points of this project is to make those people more visible to researchers through the stubborn method of finding all names in every dedication. My hope is that this visual representation is a rhetorical and argumentative step in that direction, making the people, texts, and relations of imaginative print networks visible. Finally, I again call attention to the useful flattening of the network's temporalities. By not separating living figures from dead ones in these graphs, it is easier to see the ways in which people of the past continue to exert great influence over social networks of the living. As William St. Clair reoriented our understanding of reception by showing that reading was centered not simply on current publication but around a library of books from the recent and the distant past; so these networks suggest that the

imaginative worlds of early modern print, manifest in dedications, are constituted of figures from a long history and not just the patrons and politicians of the day.<sup>119</sup>

Throughout this dissertation I have reflected in several ways on what it might mean to represent different aspects of early modern sociality as networks. In doing so my intention has been to reveal the ways in which relationality contributes to authorship and how such relations inflect forms: literary works are shaped by the relations that constitute them. The representation of dedicatory relations as a network highlights the ways in which books are implicated in a large imaginative network that spans many historical periods, economic roles, and social classes. At stake in this representation is the casting off of the assumption that texts are the result either of a single individual's vision or of unmappable, diffuse cultural forces. Even a cursory look at the networks available in print showcases a vast but delimited set of relations we can use to more clearly understand the connections that undergird early modern literary production.

I want to conclude with a final word on the kinds of work that make such insights possible. Digital humanities work, especially computational analysis like the work done here, is collaborative by necessity. My work on the *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon* network in the previous chapter is the direct result of a team of scholars managing data and creating interfaces to that data.<sup>120</sup> My work in the network project outlined above is the result of a long chain of collaborations and social relationships: the decades-long effort of the EEBO-TCP to create machine-readable texts, the development of natural language processing software attuned to early modern spellings at Northwestern University, the collaborative working environment at the Folger Shakespeare Library's Early Modern Digital Agendas seminar, and the code training, advice, and assistance I received from the Humanities Digital Workshop at Washington

---

<sup>119</sup>See St. Clair.

<sup>120</sup>The core group of *Six Degrees* collaborators comprises Christopher Warren, Daniel Shore, Jessica Otis, and Scott Weingart, though many others were involved at various stages of the project's life.

University in St. Louis and dSHARP at Carnegie Mellon University, to name a few. I acknowledge these contributions here rather than in an acknowledgments section because they constitute collaboration rather than influence or assistance. Like the working relationships I reconstruct in this dissertation, digital projects necessitate many stages of collaboration and shared endeavour. To understand how knowledge is produced and how work is done, and to make more such work possible in the future, scholars must be unafraid to recognize the ways in which achievements that appear individual are in fact the result of community efforts.



## Works Cited

- Ahn, Yong-Yeol et al. "Flavor Network and the Principles of Food Pairing." *Scientific Reports* 1 (2011): 196. Web. 16 Aug. 2018.
- Bayard, Pierre. *How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2007. Print.
- Duhaime, Douglas. "Co-Citation Networks in the EEBO TCP." *Douglas Duhaime Blog*. Web. 28 Feb. 2018.
- Gavin, Michael. "Historical Text Networks: The Sociology of Early English Criticism." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 50.1 (2016): 53–80. Web. 13 Aug. 2018.
- Greteman, Blaine. "Shakeosphere." *University of Iowa Libraries*. Web. 28 Feb. 2018.
- Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Web. 14 Jan. 2014.
- Mueller, Martin. "Digital Shakespeare, or Towards a Literary Informatics." *Shakespeare* 4.3 (2008): 284–301. Web. 13 Dec. 2013.
- St. Clair, William. *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- Warren, Christopher N. et al. "Six Degrees of Francis Bacon: A Statistical Method for Reconstructing Large Historical Social Networks." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 10.3 (2016): n. pag. Web. 25 Jan. 2018.